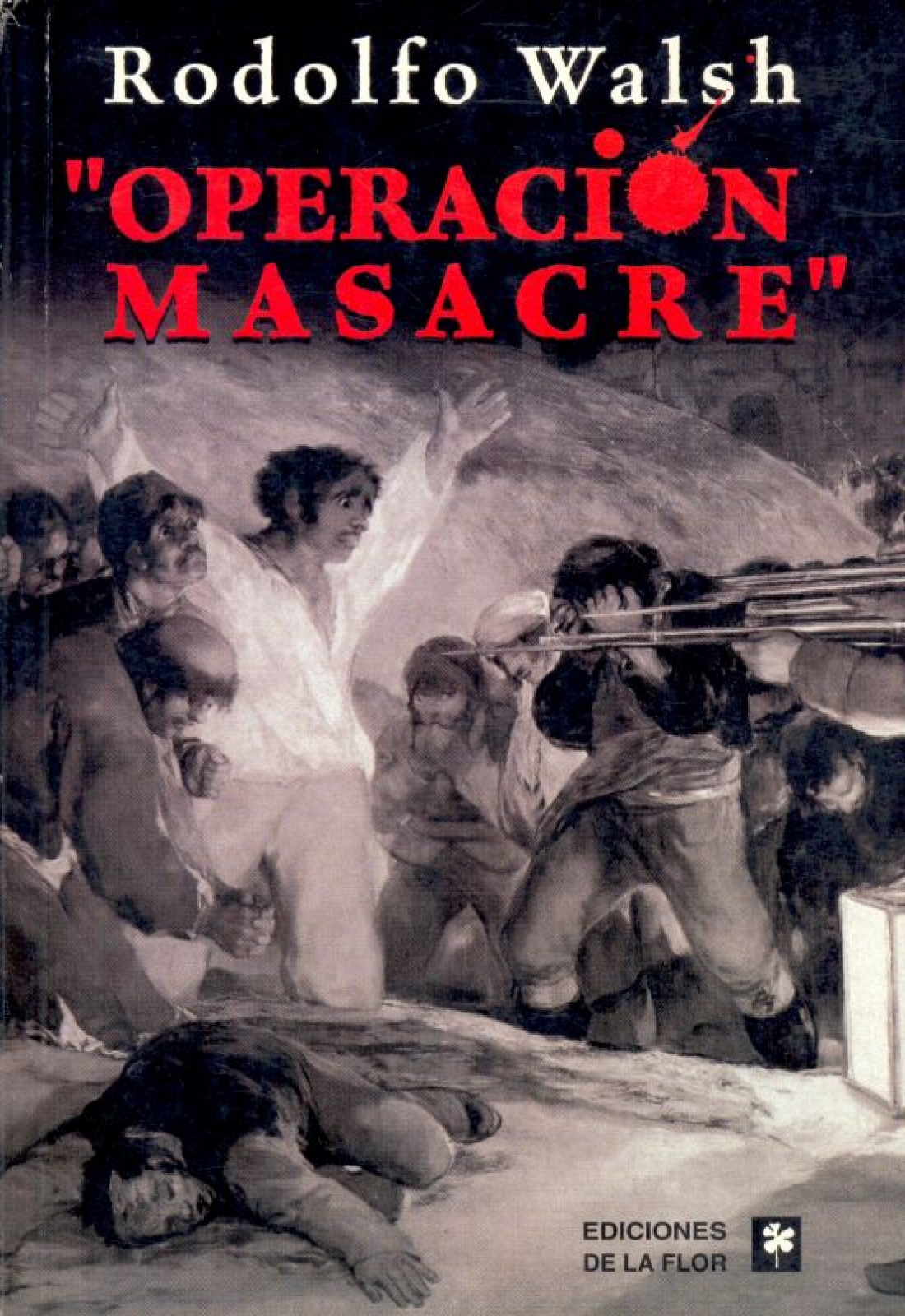
Rodolfo Walsh

# "OPERACIÓN MASACRE"



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RODOLFO J. WALSH

# OPERATION MASSACRE

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# RODOLFO WALSH: TABOO AND MYTH

*Osvaldo Bayer*

I have no other way to define Rodolfo Walsh than to take Madame de Staél's phrase referring to Schiller: “Conscience is his muse.” His conscience followed him everywhere. (“I feel insulted, as I felt without knowing it when I heard that heartbreaking scream behind the blind.”) That is the parameter of your life: your conscience. Predestination to mix with life, to get involved. He was not aware, perhaps, of his predestination. The blood that circulated through his veins did not leave him calm with the products it deposited in his brain. His best literary qualities were soul and humanity. (And precisely those are not what you have to have to be considered a literary creator. The official mandarins of the culture of '83 wanted to apostrophize him with that of "aesthete of death."

Arrogance and profound human ignorance typical of a certain academic culture supported by papers from Harvard and Cambridge.) Yes, because Rodolfo Walsh was from Choele-Choel and had ridden two hundred kilometers to save his dead father's horse. That is your true university; those hours full of pain for the boy before that threatening world, before that God ontologically unfair to the weak, who are always the ones lacking in malice. Walsh's inspiration always came from counterparts, because he suspected the myopia that grows in the routine of the cloisters. That's why Walsh escapes the established critics - the frigid and the infibulated - who cannot pigeonhole him. And they will never be able to. Those synodal examiners do not dare to postpone him but they do not give him the pass to be admitted to sacred orders. They classify him as a journalist to send him to the miscellaneous merchandise warehouse. Walsh - I think - would have gladly accepted the definition of "author of police novels for the poor" if he had read the essay that a good man dedicated to him, perhaps somewhat confused by the enormous power of this author and his work, by the wild mixture of ethics and rebellion, with an imagination where the early transfusions of the blood of Georg Büchner, Roberto Arlt and that incredible “frantic reporter” Egon Erich Kisch, the brilliant chronicler of the Weimar Republic who exposed the fallacy, can be seen. of Hitler and his protectors, and he anticipated everything before '33. I don't know if Walsh wanted to do more social pedagogy than literature with his typewriter; whether he proposed it or asked himself. Your answers are ironic in this regard. Their language dominated all records; He was interested in being brief and clear so that the poor reader of detective novels could understand it. Neither established Argentine society nor its acolytes will ever forgive him for this, who never want to lose the train of power and feel comfortable in sacralizing their octogenarian intellectuals sunk in the soft disenchantment of life with the always elegant metaphor of doubt and pessimism.

They will not forgive Walsh because he flew over his own labyrinth to accompany in square and symmetrical streets, numbered from one to one hundred, the stranger who is condemned to death every day by circumstances and his custodians.

Taboo and myth will forever remain Rodolfo Walsh between our Argentine society and its cultural mandarins, on the one hand, and those who wander between poetry, dreams and justice with sunshine.

Walsh has been called “the anti-Borges.” What a strange coincidence. To the young Büchner (barely

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with his masterful fragment *Lenz,* with his *Woyzeck,* his *Leonce and Lena,* his *Death of Dantón)* they describe him as the “anti-Jünger” (and this one, the “German Borges”). Büchner was - like Walsh - an agitator. Walsh was, like Büchner, a smuggler of literature. Büchner was a precocious communist; Walsh, a consistent and unhurried Latin American revolutionary. Ernst Jünger (the German Borges - or Borges, the Argentine Jünger) has been called, not without some tenderness, in a summit seminar in Berlin, *a noble fascist of proportionate coldness,* where the adjective fascist was not intended as a pejorative but as a category of thought. Perhaps to avoid confusion, the sociologist Oskar Negt was quick to correct that title to that of a *constitutional anti-democrat.* In any case, Jünger (the German Borges) has built the strong pillars of the theoretical edifice of the conservative revolution. A pioneer. Walsh, the anti-Borges? Perhaps an excessively pompous definition, a bit to scare the careless. Or rather a desperate search for congruence between the concepts of morality, aesthetics and politics. Walsh is always young, impetuous. Flight and depth. In his conversation with the poor reader of detective novels there is genius, tragedy, mystery, longing. (What is literature, perhaps?)

They will never forgive Walsh for that: that he has always remained young. They escape the molds and the schools. He knew how to see and undressed the entire Argentine society when he stopped playing chess and looked out to see what was happening. Thus *Operation Massacre was born.* In those few pages is the entire Argentine society that never stopped governing. There are those in uniform but also justice, in those heroes of the law: Sebastián Soler, Alconada Aramburu, Amílcar Mercader. They come and go and change their names but not their faces and they exist in all eras, since 1810.

*Operation Massacre* is the great warning cry. No one like Walsh knew how to describe the true founders of the great massacre that would come later. Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez is nothing more than the reincarnation of the other Lieutenant Colonel Héctor Benigno Várela, rifleman of the Patagonian peonadas, and the contemporary predecessor of those figures almost implausible in their cruelty and brutal arrogance: Menéndez, Massera, Camps. Fernández Suárez's method is the same: bravado, beating, intimidation, torture, theft of belongings, murder. Walsh puts the evidence on the table one by one. The Aramburu, Rojas, Manrique Quaranta turn to civilians. Civilians always find the solution. The speech of Aguirre Lanari - a man of all dictatorships and our poor democracies - in La Plata, says it all. The murderer will be applauded. Walsh doesn't complain: he demonstrates. When one reads *Operation Massacre* one can understand very well the reason for the reaction of the youth in the sixties and seventies. That is the root of violence. You had to be very small, as a young man, not to feel ashamed.

Coupism will come as a profession, with those protagonists worthy of farce and soap operas from the beginning of the century, such as Toranzo Montero, Sánchez de Bustamante, López Aufranc. And after them will appear a Francoist Aramburu: the sad Onganía with his general Fonseca, the one with the long canes. All this and much more. That was the example of democracy given to our youth. Violence was sown. And its representative bishops were generals and admirals with measured gestures, supported by intellectuals based in the aristocracy of culture and anxious politicians leaning out of the doors of the barracks, while the commoners, the commoners, were beaten and prodded. There was no more censorship for the reading classes but bullets were put into the garbage dumps. A people, hand in hand with Peronist democracy to the new infamous decade of the fifties and

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sixty; the first, thirteen years old; the second, eighteen. *But what afflicts most is the offense that the man carries inside,* it is enough for him to write to Walsh.

And later: *Then we are all ashamed.* There his conscience is dictating to him, he limits himself to typing. *He is also not a movie hero but just a man who takes heart;* yes, in speaking of another, Walsh is describing himself. And he makes contact with those who are going to be his characters: *I have spoken with survivors, widows, orphans, conspirators, asylum seekers, fugitives, alleged informers, anonymous heroes.* Walsh, like Arlt, does not sublimate the townspeople. For Walsh, it is what it is and in three lines he portrays it when talking to us about a neighbor, Don Pedro: *His ideas are entirely common, the ideas of the townspeople; generally accurate with respect to concrete* and *tangible things, nebulous or arbitrary in other areas.* Walsh has no illusions, he takes them as they are, but that doesn't mean they should be shot or prodded. He describes them as Arlt paints in etching the execution of Di Giovanni, when he sees a man die, not the most persecuted in society. There are no adjectives or metaphors. He is a man who dies. One more man who dies: the true protagonist is the entire lascivious and snitching society that shoots him.

*Operation Massacre is* the prologue to the tragedy that will come later. Aramburu and Rojas will be the prologue for Videla and Massera. Rodolfo Walsh will go from witness to protagonist. He will be shot to death, like his José León Suárez characters. Our society frantically applauds our intellectuals who are turning eighty years old and have helped us so much to always have the final point ready and due obedience.

Rodolfo Walsh does not exist. He's just a fictional character. The best character in Argentine literature. Just a detective from a poor man's detective novel. That will never die.

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*To Enriqueta Muñiz*

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*The deponent adds that the commission entrusted was terribly unpleasant for the speaker, since it came out of all the specific functions of the police.*

INSPECTOR COMMISSIONER
RODOLFO RODRÍGUEZ MORENO

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# FOREWORD

The first news about the clandestine executions of June 1956 came to me by chance, at the end of that year, in a cafe in La Plata where chess was played, there was more talk about Keres or Nimzovitch than about Aramburu and Rojas, and the The only military maneuver that enjoyed any renown was Schlechter's bayonet attack on the Sicilian opening.

In that same place, six months before, we had been surprised one midnight by the nearby shooting that began the assault on the second division command and the police department, in the failed Valle revolution. I remember how we went out in droves, the chess players, the knuckleball players and the occasional patrons, to see what a celebration that was, and how as we approached the Plaza San Martín we became more serious and there were fewer and fewer of us, and finally when I crossed the square, I saw myself alone, and when I entered the bus station there were a few of us again, including a little black man in a security uniform who had taken cover behind some rubber bands and said that, revolution or No, they were not going to take away his weapon, which was a remarkable Mauser from the year 1901.

I remember that later I found myself alone again, on the darkened 54th Street, where three blocks later my house should be, which I wanted to get to and I finally arrived two hours later, among the aroma of the lime trees that always made me nervous. , and that night more than others. I remember the uncontrollable autonomy of my legs, the preference that, at each side street, they showed for the bus station, to which they returned on their own two and three times, but each time from further away, until the last time they did not need to go. come back because we had crossed the line of fire and were at my house. My house was worse than the cafe and worse than the bus station, because there were soldiers on the roofs and in the kitchen and in the bedrooms, but mainly in the bathroom, and since then I have taken an aversion to houses that are in front of a barracks, a command or a police department.

Nor do I forget that, standing close to the blinds, I heard a conscript die in the street and that man did not say: “Long live the country” but he said: “Don't leave me alone, sons of bitches.”

Afterwards I don't want to remember more, neither the voice of the announcer at dawn announcing that eighteen civilians have been executed in Lanús, nor the wave of blood that floods the country until Valle's death. I have too much for one night. Valley doesn't interest me. Perón does not interest me, the revolution does not interest me. Can I go back to chess?

Can. To chess and the fantasy literature that I read, to the detective stories that I write, to the “serious” novel that I plan for in a few years, and to other things that I do for a living and that I call journalism, although it is not journalism. Violence has splashed my walls, there are bullet holes in the windows, I have seen a car with holes in it and inside a man with his brains exposed, but it is only chance that has put this before my eyes. It could have happened a hundred kilometers away, it could have happened when I was not there.

Six months later, on a stifling summer night, in front of a glass of beer, a man tells me:

–There is a shot who lives.

I don't know what manages to attract me in that diffuse, distant story, bristling with improbabilities. I don't know why I ask to speak with that man, why I am talking to Juan Carlos Livraga.

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But then I know. I look at that face, the hole in the cheek, the larger hole in the throat, the broken mouth and the opaque eyes where a shadow of death has remained floating. I feel insulted, as I unknowingly felt when I heard that heartbreaking scream behind the blind.

Livraga tells me her incredible story; I believe it on the spot.

This is how that research, this book, was born. The long night of June 9 returns to me, for the second time it takes me out of “the soft, quiet seasons.” Now, for almost a year I will not think about anything else, I will leave my house and my job, my name will be Francisco Freyre, I will have a false ID with that name, a friend will lend me a house in Tigre, for two months I will live in a frozen Merlo ranch, I will carry a revolver with me, and every moment the figures of the drama will return obsessively: Livraga bathed in blood walking through that endless alley through which he came out of death, and the other who was saved with him by shooting through the field between the bullets, and those who were saved without his knowledge, and those who were not saved.

Because what Livraga knows is that there were a few of them and they took them to be shot, that there were about ten of them and they took them away, and that he and Giunta were alive. That is the story that I hear him repeat before the judge, one morning when I am Livraga's cousin and that is why I can enter the judge's office, where everything breathes discretion and skepticism, where the story sounds a little more absurd, a degree more tropical, and I see that the judge hesitates, until Livraga's voice climbs that arduous hill behind which only crying remains, and he makes a gesture of undressing so that they can see the other bullet. So we are all ashamed, it seems to me that the judge is moved and I am moved again by my cousin's misfortune.

That is the story that I write in a hurry and in one go, so that they don't get the better of me, but then it gets wrinkled day by day in my pocket because I walk it all over Buenos Aires and no one wants to publish it, and almost nor find out. The thing is that one comes to believe in the detective novels that one has read or written, and one thinks that a story like that, with a dead man who talks, is going to be fought over in the newsrooms, one thinks that one is running a race against time, that in At any moment a big newspaper is going to send a dozen reporters and photographers like in the movies. Instead, he finds himself faced with a massive dodge.

It's a laughing matter, twelve years later because you can review the collections of the newspapers, and this story did not exist and does not exist.

So I wander through suburbs that are increasingly remote from journalism, until I finally end up in a basement in Leandro Alem where a union sheet is being made, and I find a man who is encouraged. Shaking and sweating, because he is not a movie hero either, but simply a man who is encouraged, and that is more than a movie hero. And the story comes out, it is a flurry of little yellow sheets in the newsstands, it comes out without a signature, poorly laid out, with the titles changed, but it comes out. I look at her with affection as she disappears in ten thousand anonymous hands.

But I've been even luckier. From the beginning, a girl who is a journalist has been with me, her name is Enriqueta Muñiz, she plays her part. It is difficult to do it justice in a few lines. I simply want to say that somewhere in this book I write “I did”, “I went”, “I discovered”, it should be understood “we did”, “we went”, “we discovered”. She achieved some important things alone, such as the testimonies of the exiles Troxler, Benavídez, and Gavino. At that time the world did not appear to me as an ordered series of guarantees and

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assurances, but rather the opposite. In Enriqueta Muñiz I found that security, courage, intelligence that seemed so rare around me.

So one afternoon we took the train to José León Suárez, we took a camera and a pencil piano that Livraga had made for us, a detailed bus map with the routes and level crossings, a marked grove of trees and an (x), which is where the thing went. We walked about eight blocks along a paved road, at dusk, we saw that tall, dark row of eucalyptus trees that the executioner Rodríguez Moreno thought was “a suitable place for the purpose,” that is, for the purpose of thundering them, and we found ourselves in front of a sea of cans and mirages. Not the least of these mirages is the idea that a place like this cannot be so calm, so silent and forgotten under the sun that is about to set, without anyone watching over the history imprisoned in the garbage cut by the false tide. of dead metals that shine reflectively. But Enriqueta says “Here it was” and sits down on the ground naturally so I can take a picnic photo, because at that moment a tall, sombre man with a large, somber dog passes by on the road. I don't know why one sees those things. But here it was, and Livraga's story runs stronger now, here the road, there the ditch and everywhere the garbage dump and the night.

The next day we go to see the other one who was saved, Miguel Ángel Giunta, who greets us with a slam of the door in our faces, he doesn't believe us when we announce that we are journalists, he asks us for credentials that we don't have, and I don't know what we tell him, through the peephole, what a promise of silence, what a hidden key, so that he opens the door little by little, and leaves, which takes him about half an hour, and speaks, which takes him much longer.

It's killer to listen to Giunta, because you have the feeling of watching a movie that, since it was shot that night, has been spinning and spinning inside your head, never being able to stop. There are all the little details, the faces, the lights, the field, the little noises, the cold and the heat, the escape between the cans, and the smell of gunpowder and panic, and you think that when it's over it's going to start again, As it is certain that that eternal continuation begins inside his head, “This is how they shot me.” But what is most distressing is the offense that the man carries inside, how he is hurt by that mistake they made with him, who is a decent man and was not even a Peronist, “and everyone can tell him who I am.” Although that is no longer certain, because there are two Giuntas, this one who talks torrentially while the big movie is playing, and another who sometimes gets distracted and manages to smile and make a joke like before.

It seems that the case will end here, because there is nothing more to tell. Two survivors, and the rest are dead. One can publish the report on Giunta and return to that game that was left hanging in the cafe a month ago. But it doesn't end. At the last moment Giunta remembers a belief that he has, not something he knows, but something he has imagined or heard whispered, and that is that there is a third man who was saved.

Meanwhile, the great divinity of the cattle prod and his machine guns begins to thunder from La Plata. The little sheet of the report floats in the hallways of the Police Headquarters, and Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez wants to know what nonsense this is. The report was not signed, but my initials appeared at the bottom of the originals. A journalist with the same initials worked in the newspaper, although they were called in a different order: JWR One morning he wakes up to contemplate an interesting concentration of rifles and other syllogistic implements, and his spirit experiences that great emotion prior to a truth about to be revealed. . They take him out in his underwear and take him on a flight to La Plata and the Headquarters,

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They sit him in an armchair and in front of him sits the lieutenant colonel, who tells him, “And now please, do a report on me. The journalist clarifies that it is not him who receives these honors, while he quietly remembers my mother.

The wheel keeps turning, we have to go through those wastelands in search of the third man, Horacio di Chiano, who has turned into a worm and lives underground. It seems that they already know us in many places, the kids at least follow us, and one day a girl stops us on the street.

–The man you are looking for –he tells us– is in his house. They are going to tell you that it is not there, but it is there.

–And do you know why we come?

–Yes, I know everything.

Well, Cassandra.

They tell us that it is not there, but it is there, and we must overcome the protective barriers, the cautious deities that guard someone buried alive, this wall, this face that denies and distrusts. You go from the sun of the street to the shade of the porch, you ask for a glass of water and you stay inside, in the dark, you pronounce lock-pick words, until the rustiest of the bunch works, and Don Horacio di Chiano raises the door. staircase holding the hand of his wife, who carries him like a boy.

So there are three.

The next day an anonymous letter reaches the newspaper and says that “they managed to escape: Livraga, Giunta and the former non-commissioned officer Gavino.”

So there are four. And Gavino, the letter says, “was able to get into the Bolivian embassy and seek asylum in that country.”

At the Bolivian embassy I don't find Gavino, but I find his friend Torres, who smiles, counts on his fingers, tells me: “He's missing two,” and talks to me about Troxler and Benavídez.

So there are six.

And since we're at it, won't there be seven? Maybe, Torres tells me, because there was a sergeant with a very common last name, something like García or Rodríguez, and no one knows what happened to him.

Two or three days later I saw Torres again and shot him at point-blank range: –Rogelio Díaz.

His face lights up.

–How did he do it?

I don't remember how I did it. But there are seven.

Then I can sit down, because I have already spoken with survivors, widows, orphans, conspirators, asylum seekers, fugitives, alleged informers, anonymous heroes. In the month of May, I have written half of this book. Again the walk in search of someone to publish it. Around that time the Jacovella brothers released a magazine. I speak with Bruno, then with Tulio. Tulio Jacovella reads the manuscript, and laughs, not at the manuscript, but at the trouble he is going to get into, and he gets into it.

The rest is the story that follows. It was published in “Majoría”, from May to July 1957.

Later there were appendices, corollaries, denials and replies, which prolonged that campaign until April 1958. I have suppressed them, as well as part of the evidence that I used then and that I replace here with something more categorical. Faced with this new evidence, I believe that

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controversy is ruled out.

Acknowledgments: to Dr. Jorge Doglia, former head of the judicial division of the province's police, exonerated for his complaints about this case; Dr. Máximo von Kotsch, lawyer for Juan C. Livraga and Miguel Giunta; to Leónidas Barletta, director of the newspaper “Propósitos”, where Livraga's initial complaint was published; to Dr. Cerruti Costa, director of the defunct newspaper “Revolución Nacional”, where the first reports on this case appeared; to Bruno and Tulio Jacovella; to Dr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, who published the first book edition of this story; to Edmundo A. Suárez, exonerated from Radio del Estado for giving me a photocopy of that station's announcers' book, which proved the exact time martial law was enacted; to the former terrorist called “Marcelo”, who risked bringing me information, and shortly after was atrociously stung; to the anonymous informant who signed “Atilas”; to the anonymous Cassandra, who knew everything; to Horacio Manigua, who gave me shelter; to the families of the victims.

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# FIRST PART

# PEOPLE

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# 1. CARRANZA

Nicolás Carranza was not a happy man, that night of June 9, 1956. Under the cover of the shadows he had just entered his house, and it is possible that something bit him inside.
We will never fully know. Man takes many hard thoughts to the grave, and in the grave of Nicolás Carranza the earth is already dry.

For a moment, however, he was able to forget his worries. After the initial stunned silence, a chorus of shrill voices rose to greet him. Nicolás Carranza had six children.
The little ones will have clung to his knees. The eldest, Elena, will have put her head within arm's reach of her father. The tiny Julia Renée – barely forty days old – was dozing in her crib.

Her partner, Berta Figueroa, looked up from the sewing machine. He smiled at her with a mixture of sadness and joy. It was always the same. Her man always arrived like this: fleeing, nocturnal, fleeting. Sometimes he would stay one night, then disappear for weeks. There he sent him a message: he was at a friend's house. And then it was she who went to meet him, leaving the boys with a neighbor, and spent a few hours with him filled with fear, anxiety, and the bitterness of having to leave him and wait for the slow passage of time without news from him.

Nicolás Carranza was a Peronist. And he was on the run.

That's why, when on furtive returns like this one, some kid from the neighborhood yelled at the find him: “Goodbye, Don Carranza!”, he... quickened his pace and did not answer.

–Hey, Don Carranza! –curiosity followed him.

But Don Carranza – a low, solid silhouette in the night – was quickly moving away through the dirt street, raising the lapels of his coat up to his eyes.

And now he was sitting in the dining room chair, swinging on his knees Berta Josefa, two years old, and Carlos Alberto, three years old, and perhaps Juan Nicolás, four years old – a whole ladder of kids Don Carranza had –, swinging them and imitating the roar and whistle of the trains driven by men like him, people from that railway neighborhood.

Afterwards, he talked with his favorite, Elena, who was eleven years old – tall and tall for her age, with big brown eyes – he told her something about his adventures mixed with some smiling fable, and he questioned her with concern, with fear, with tenderness, because The truth is, his heart sank every time he looked at her, since she was imprisoned.

Imprisoned for several hours, although it may seem like a story, they had her in Frías (Santiago del Estero) on January 26, 1956. The father had left her there on the 25th with the mother's relatives, taking advantage of one of his regular trips on the line to the North. del Belgrano, where he worked as a waiter, and had moved on. In Simoca, province of Tucumán, he was arrested for a complaint of distributing pamphlets that was never proven.

At eight the next morning they took Elena from her relatives' house, took her alone to the police station and interrogated her for four hours. Did your father carry pamphlets? Was your father a Peronist? Was your father a criminal?

Don Carranza went crazy when he heard the news.

–To *me,* let them do anything to me. But to a creature...

He roared and sobbed.

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They were shot in Tucumán.

And surely since then a dangerous gleam appeared in the eyes of this man with a firm and clear face, who was previously cheerful, fond of fun and a favorite friend of all the kids in the neighborhood, his own and those of others.

They all had dinner together this night of June 9 in that house in the working-class neighborhood of Boulogne. Then the boys went to bed and they were alone, he and Berta.

She spoke to him about her sorrows, her worries. Wouldn't the railroad take away their house, now that he was unemployed and a fugitive? It was a good house, made of material, with flowers in the garden, and everyone came in there, even a couple of factory girls that he had taken on as boarders to help them. What were she and the boys going to live with if they took it away?

He told her about his fears. Always that fear of being caught on any given night and They would beat him at any police station until he made him an idiot. And he repeated the eternal prayer:

–Turn yourself in. If you turn yourself in, maybe they won't hit you. And he gets out of jail, Nicolás... He didn't want to. He took refuge in hard, dry, definitive statements: –I have not stolen. I have not killed. I'm not a criminal.

The small radio, on the shelf of the sideboard, broadcast popular music. After a long silence, Nicolás Carranza stood up, took his coat from the hanger and slowly put it on.

She looked at him again with a resigned expression.

-Where are you going?

-I have to do. Maybe I'll come back tomorrow.

–You don't sleep here.

-No. I'm not sleeping here tonight.

He entered the bedroom and kissed all the boys, one by one: Elena, María Eva, Juan Nicolás, Carlos Alberto, Berta Josefa, Julia Renée. Then he said goodbye to his wife.

-See you tomorrow.

He gave her a kiss, went out onto the sidewalk and turned left. He crossed B. Street, just a few steps and stopped in front of house 32.

He knocked on the door.

# 2. GARIBOTTI

House of brave young men and perhaps a stormy atmosphere, this one of the Garibottis, in the Workers' Quarter of Boulogne. The father, Francisco, was a picture of a man: tall, muscular, with a square and energetic face, with slightly hostile eyes, a thin mustache that extended far beyond the corners of his lips.

The mother was also a beautiful woman, although with harsh and plebeian features. High, resolved, of somewhat disdainful mouth and eyes that do not smile.

There are also six children, like Carranza's, but that is where the similarity ends. Boys, the five oldest, from Juan Carlos who is turning eighteen, to Norberto, who is eleven.

Delia Beatriz, nine, somewhat mitigates that strictly masculine atmosphere. brunette,

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bangs, smiling eyes, the father softens in front of her. A photo in a display case shows her in a white overall, next to the school blackboard.

The entire family is represented on the walls. Glued to a large piece of cardboard and within a frame, remote yellow snapshots of Francisco and Florinda - they are young and laughing in a park -, passport photos of the father and the children and even some fleeting faces of relatives or friends. The inevitable “portraits” have also been here, as in Carranza's, and they have left, behind a double “bombé” frame, a profusion of blues and golds that purport to represent two of the boys, we can't guess which ones.

The decorative or remembrance passion culminates in the planned lithograph of Gardel, cut out in black, his hat almost covering his face, his foot resting on a chair, plucking the guitar.

But it is a clean, solid, discreetly furnished house, a house where you can live well a worker. And “the company” charges them less than one hundred pesos in rent.

That's perhaps why Francisco Garibotti doesn't want to get into trouble. He knows that things are bad in the union – military inspectors and fellow prisoners – but all that will pass one day. You have to be patient and wait.

Garibotti is thirty-eight years old, and sixteen years of service on the Belgrano Railway. Now he works on the local line.

That afternoon he left the service around five o'clock and came directly home.

Of the male children, the one he prefers is perhaps the second. His name is like him: Francisco, with the addition of Osmar. This boy with a serious look is sixteen years old, who is also about to enter the railroad.

There is true camaraderie between the two. The father likes to play the guitar and the boy sings. That's what they do that afternoon.

It gets dark soon these days of June, in the middle of winter.

When they want to agree, it is already night. The mother sets the table for dinner. In the kitchen a frying pan sizzles.

Francisco Garibotti has almost finished dinner – a steak with fried eggs he ate that night – when they knock on the door.

It's Don Carranza.

What is Nicolás Carranza coming to do?

–He came to take it off. So that they would return him dead – Florinda Allende will remember with resentment in the voice.

The two men talk for a while. Florinda has retired to the kitchen. She senses that her husband has the itch to go out this Saturday night, and she is going to fight for her right, but in her domain, without the presence of her neighbor.

It doesn't take long for Francisco to enter.

“I have to go out,” he says, without looking at her.

“We were going to the movies,” she reminds him.

-Yes it's correct. Maybe we have time to go later.

–You had agreed to go out with me.

-I'll be right back. I run an errand and come back.

–I don't know what diligence you will have to do.

–I'll explain to you later. The truth is, he clarifies, anticipating the reproach, this one has me a little tired too... With his things...

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-Not seem.

–Look, this is the last time I take the note. Wait for me for a while.

And as if to reaffirm that he only leaves for a moment, that he has every intention of come back as soon as possible, he shouts from the door as he finishes putting on his coat: -If Vivas arrives, tell him to wait for me. I'm going to do an errand and come back.

The two friends come out. They walk several blocks down the long Guayaquil street, turn left right, heading to the station.

There they take the first location that goes to Florida. It's just a few minutes by train.

There are no witnesses to what they are talking about. We can only formulate conjectures. It is possible that Garibotti will repeat Berta Figueroa's advice to his friend: to turn himself in. It is possible that Carranza in turn wants to give him some errand in case he is absent from home. Perhaps he is aware of the approaching mutiny and will mention it to you. Or simply tell him: –Let's go to a friend's house to listen to the radio.

They are going to break news...

There are also more innocent explanations. A card game or the Lausse fight that will later be broadcast on the radio. There was something to all of that. There is no doubt that Garibotti left reluctantly and with the intention of returning soon. If they don't do it later it is because they have managed to conquer their curiosity, or their interest, or their inertia. He does not carry weapons on him and at no time will he have them in his hands.

Carranza is also unarmed. He will allow himself to be arrested without resistance. He will allow himself to be killed like a boy, without a single movement of rebellion. Uselessly asking for mercy until the final shot.

They go down in Florida. They turn right and cross the tracks. They walk six blocks along Hipólito Yrigoyen Street. They go through Franklin. They stop – Carranza stops – in front of a farm with two small wooden gates painted light blue that lead to the same garden.

They enter through the one on the right. They go down a long hallway. They knock on a door.

We will no longer have certain references to Garibotti. So that some of us can collect Carranza before the final silence, many hours will have to pass.

And many incomprehensible things.

# 3. DON HORACIO

Florida , over FC Belgrano, it is 24 minutes from Retiro. It is not the best of Vicente López's game, but it is not the worst either. The municipality haggles over water and sanitation works, there are potholes in the pavements, there are no signs on the corners, but the town lives despite everything.

The neighborhood where so many unforeseen things are going to happen is about six blocks from the station, going west. It offers the violent contrasts of developing areas, where the residential and the squalid converge, the recently completed chalet next to the wasteland of weeds and cans.

The average inhabitant is a man between thirty and forty years old who has his own house, with a garden that he cultivates in his spare time, and who has not yet finished paying his loan.

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bank account that allowed him to acquire it. He lives with a not very large family and works in Buenos Aires as a commercial employee or as a specialized worker. He gets along well with neighbors and proposes or accepts initiatives for the common good. He plays sports – usually football –, discusses the usual topics of politics, and under any government he protests without getting angry against the rise in life and impossible transportation.

There is a not very wide range of variations on this scheme. Life is calm, without ups and downs. Nothing ever really happens here.

In winter the streets are semi-deserted early in the morning. The corners are poorly lit and you have to cross them with caution to avoid getting muddy in the puddles caused by the lack of drains. Where there is a small bridge or a row of stones to facilitate the crossing, it is the work of the neighbors. Sometimes the dark water reaches from one ridge to another, and more than seen it is guessed by the reflection of some star or the dim lanterns that languish on the porches until the wee hours. Only on San Martín Avenue do you notice any movement: a passing bus, a neon sign, the cold blue glow of a bar's window.

The house where Carranza and Garibotti have entered, where the first act of the drama will take place and to which a ghostly witness will finally return, has two apartments: one in the front and one in the back. To get to it, you have to walk down a long corridor, limited on the right by a party wall and on the left by a high ligustrina fence. The corridor, at the end of which you can see a green metal door, is so narrow that you can only walk in single file. It is advisable to retain the detail; has some importance.

The apartment in the back is rented to a man to whom we will return at the last minute. In the front one, the owner of the entire property, Don Horacio di Chiano, lives with his family.

Don Horacio is a small, dark-skinned man with a mustache and glasses. He is around fifty years old and has been employed as an electrician at Italo for seventeen years. His aspirations are simple: retire and then work for a while on his own, before retiring permanently.

His house transcends peaceful and satisfied middle class. From the standard furniture to the ornamental plates that distractedly reiterate sentences on the walls – “To err is human, to forgive is divine” – or some naive audacity: “Love makes time pass, time makes love pass”, to the devoted image that the wife, or the only daughter, Nélida, a silent twenty-four-year-old girl, has placed in a corner. The only notable thing is a certain abundance of curtains, pillows, and rugs. Mrs. Pilar –

white hair and gentle manners – she is an upholsterer.

For Don Horacio, this Saturday is identical to hundreds of other Saturdays. He has remained on call at his job. Their job is to repair damage to subscribers' facilities. At five in the afternoon he receives the last claim, coming from Palermo. He goes out there, fixes the installation and returns to Central. By then it is already night. At 8:45 p.m. he telephoned his departure to the Balcarce office and began his return home.

There is nothing new in this routine. It is the same for years and years. Nor is the world different when he takes the train at the Retiro del Belgrano station. The evening newspapers do not bring news of greater importance. In the United States, General Eisenhower has been operated on. In London and Washington, Bulganin's notes on the

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disarmament San Lorenzo defeats Huracán in an early match of the soccer championship. General Aramburu makes one of his periodic trips, this time to Rosario. The federal auditor receives it with lyrical outpourings: "... the time has come to work in peace, to bear fruit in peace, to dream in peace and to love in peace...". The President responds with a phrase that he will repeat the next day, but in different circumstances: “Do not fear the fearful. “Freedom has won the game.” Later he gives the journalists who accompany him fatherly advice on how to tell the truth. Nothing new, really, happens in the world. The only thing of any interest are the calculations and comments prior to the big boxing fight for the South American title that takes place that night at Luna Park.

Don Horacio's arrival at his house coincides with that of another neighbor, who lives fifty meters away, on the same Yrigoyen street. It's Miguel Ángel Giunta. They stop for a moment to talk. There is no real friendship between them – they have known each other for less than a year – but there is a cordial neighborly relationship. In the morning they usually take the same train together. Don Horacio has invited him more than once to enter his house. Giunta did not find

until now the opportunity to accept, but tonight the offer is renewed:

–Why don't you come listen to the fight after dinner?

Giunta hesitates.

–I don't promise you anything. But it can be.

“Bring your lady,” Don Horacio insists.

Actually, that's why Giunta hesitates. That afternoon, when he left, he left his wife a little unwell. If he finds it better, he may come. The two men remain at that. Then each one hurries to enter his house. The cold has begun to set in. The thermometer reads less than 4 degrees and will continue to drop.

It's 9:30 p.m. At that moment, thirty kilometers away, in Campo de Mayo, a group of officers and non-commissioned officers under the command of Colonels Cortínez and Ibazeta began the tragic June uprising.

Don Horacio and Giunta ignore him. The majority of the country also ignores it and will continue ignoring him until after midnight.

State Radio, the official voice of the Nation, broadcasts music by Haydn.

# 4. GIUNTA

Giunta, or Don Lito as they call him in the neighborhood, returns from Villa Martelli, where he spent the afternoon with his parents. Giunta is not yet thirty years old. He is a tall, dapper, blond man with clear eyes. Expansive, graphic in gestures and language, it has a considerable dose of humor and even skeptical irony. But what immediately emerges from him is an impression of solid honesty, of sincerity. Of all the witnesses who survive the drama, none will be so convincing, none will find it so easy and natural to demonstrate their innocence, to show it concrete and almost tangible. It will be enough to talk to him for an hour, to hear him remember, to see the indignation and the evoked horror that gradually well up from within him, appear in his eyes and even make his hair stand on end, to abandon all disbelief.

Giunta has been working as a salesperson in a shoe store in Buenos Aires for fifteen years.

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It is important to point out two minor qualities, collected in the job. On the one hand, a certain practical “psychology” that sometimes allows you to guess the desires and intentions of your clients, not always easy, and by extension, of other people. Then, an enviable faculty of physiognomist, trained over the years.

He does not suspect – while dining in that peaceful house, acquired with his effort, surrounded by the affection of his loved ones – that these qualities will help him hours later to get out of the most bitter trance of his life.

# 5. DÍAZ: TWO SNAPSHOTS

Meanwhile, some people are arriving at the back apartment. At one point there will be around fifteen men playing cards around two tables, listening to the radio or talking. Some will leave and others will come. In certain cases it will be difficult to establish precisely the chronology of these arrivals and departures. And not just the chronology.
Even the identity of one or two of the protagonists will eventually be blurred or ignored.

We know, for example, that around 9 p.m. a man named Rogelio Díaz appears, but we do not know exactly who brings him or why he is coming. We know that he is a non-commissioned officer (sergeant tailor, some say), retired from the Navy, but we do not know why he has – or has – retired. We know that he lives very close there, in Munro, but we do not know if it is that simple proximity that explains his presence. We know that he is married and has two or three children, but later no one will be able to tell us the exact whereabouts of his family. Are you committed to the revolutionary movement? Could be. It may also not be.

The only precise thing, the only thing that those who remember seeing him agree on, is his physical appearance, a large, provincial, very dark man, of indefinable age ("You know that it is difficult to know the age of black people...") , cheerful conversationalist, who at one moment will be enthusiastically playing chinchón, and at another very different moment –
when everyone is already afraid – he will snore peacefully and loudly on a bench in the San Martín Regional Unit, as if it did not have the slightest weight on his conscience. In these two snapshots the entire life of a man can be summarized.*

* When I first mentioned Díaz in my notes for “National Revolution” his existence and survival were more of a hypothesis, which fortunately I was later able to verify. The person who had named him to me only remembered his last name, and even of that I wasn't sure.
Interrogating a fairly large number of secondary witnesses, I deduced that there was indeed a Sergeant Díaz. Curiously, no one remembered his first name and almost everyone assumed he was dead. Until in a weekly newspaper I found a list of prisoners in Olmos, where a certain “Díaz Rogelio” appeared. My informants then remembered that that –Rogelio– was his first name.
While this book was being published in “Majoría” magazine, I collected the following additional information about it. In fact, he was a tailor sergeant, from Santiago, in 1952 he was in the 4th Marine Infantry Battalion (in Dársena Norte), then he went to the Naval School of Río Santiago.

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# 6. LIZASO

More clear, more pressing, more tragic, the image of Carlitos Lizaso appears. This tall, thin, pale boy is twenty-one years old, with a withdrawn and almost shy character. He belongs to a large family from Vicente López.

In his house, politics has always been a dominant topic. Don Pedro Lizaso, the father, was radical at one time. Then he sympathizes with Peronism. In 1947 he was appointed municipal commissioner, for a short time. Later an adverse evolution occurred in him. Since 1950 he has distanced himself from Peronism and has to move further and further away. He is practically an opponent when the September revolution takes place.

"We had the secret hope that everything was going to change, that the good that had remained would be preserved and the bad would be destroyed," a friend of his would later say. But after...

Afterwards you know what happens. A wave of revenge shakes the country. Don Pedro Lizaso,
Aged, sick and disillusioned, he once again became an opponent.

These changes are reflected in their male children. In September 1955, when the revolution shakes everyone and those who are not fighting are glued to the radio, listening to the official news and what is leaked from the other side – a singular memory! no one will shoot them for that – someone asks Carlos: –Who would you fight for?

"I don't know," he answers, bewildered. For nobody.
–But if they forced you, if you had to choose.
Think for a second before answering.
–I think because of them –he finally answers.
They are the revolutionaries.

Since then a lot of water has passed under the bridge. Carlos Lizaso seems to have forgotten such dilemmas. The exterior of his life is that he has abandoned his secondary studies to help his father in his auctioneer's office. He works hard, has the ability to earn money, aspires to a position and is on his way to achieving it despite his youth. In his moments of rest, he distracts himself by playing chess. He is a strong player, who successfully participates in some youth tournaments.

It is not difficult to reconstruct his movements that afternoon of June 9. First he visits a sister. Later he goes to his girlfriend's house, with whom he stays for about an hour.
It's after nine when he says goodbye and leaves. Take a bus and get off in Florida.
He walks a couple of blocks, stops in front of the house with the sky-blue gates, ventures down the long corridor...

What do you know about the revolution that breaks out at that very moment? Once again the contradiction, the doubt. On the one hand, he is a quiet, thoughtful boy. He does not carry weapons on him nor does he know how to handle them. He has been exempt from military service and has never held a simple revolver in his hands.

On the other hand, we guess his mental attitude towards the political process. A detail confirms it.

After he leaves, his girlfriend finds a paper in his house written in his handwriting.

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Carlos:

“If everything goes well tonight…”

But everything will go wrong.

# 7. ALARMS AND PRESENTATIONS

There is one man, at least, who seems to sense it. Once, twice, three times he will pass by the house to look for Lizaso, to take him away, to snatch him away from death, although that point has not yet crossed anyone's mind. And it will be useless.

This man – who would later turn to terrorism and call himself “Marcelo” – plays a curious role in the events. He is a friend of the Lizaso family and other protagonists. For Carlitos he feels a paternal concern, an affection that time and misfortune will turn bitter. This man knows what is happening. Hence he fears, that he wants to take the boy. But you will always find him entertaining, animated, conversing, and you will let yourself be dissuaded by the repeated promise:

–In ten minutes I'm going...

“Marcelo” is not satisfied. Before leaving for the last time, he addresses the man whom he believes is responsible for the misleading situation that he seems to notice in the department.

He knows him. He takes him aside and they talk in low voices.

–Do all these people know something?

-No. Most don't know anything.

–And what are they doing here?

–What do I know... They're going to hear the fight.

–But you – “Marcelo” insists irritated –, why do you have them here?

–Do you want me to throw them out? I am not the owner of the house.

The discussion becomes bitter. “Marcelo” cuts her off abruptly: –Do what you

want. But that boy – he points his head at Lizaso, who is talking in a distant group – is not taking me anywhere, do you hear me?

The other shrugs.

–Stay calm. I'm not taking it anywhere. Besides, there's nothing tonight.

# 8. GAVINO

“There is nothing tonight,” Norberto Gavino repeats to himself. The radio should have given *the* news a long time ago. For a moment he thinks that “Marcelo” is right.

But then it is forgotten. If there is nothing, there is no danger to anyone. Many have simply come to visit, people he doesn't even know, it would be ridiculous to tell them: "Go away, I'm about to make a revolution."

Because there is no doubt that Gavino, although at this time he is disconnected and

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don't know what to expect, *you are* in the uprising.

A man of about forty, of medium height but athletic, gendarmerie non-commissioned officer at one time, later a land salesman, quick-tempered, hasty, prone to boasting – and to the dangerous carelessness that this entails in an existence like his –, Gavino had been plotting for quite some time. And at the beginning of May, an unfortunate episode confirmed him on that path. His wife, completely unrelated to these activities, was imprisoned as a hostage. Gavino knew that only when he surrendered would they release her. And from that moment on, he only thought about the revolution.

He was a fugitive, of course, and believed he was wanted by military and police authorities.
With plenty of reason. Everything that happened that night, the journalistic information that appeared in subsequent days and other indications confirm it.* He found nothing better to avoid the siege than to take refuge in his friend Torres' apartment.

And there he now waited, nervously, for the news that he would never hear.

# 9. EXPLANATIONS IN AN EMBASSY

And so we come to the character who explains much of the tragedy – Torres, the tenant of the apartment in the background.

Juan Carlos Torres leads two or three different lives.

For the homeowner, for example, he is the simple tenant, who pays his rent on time and does not create problems, although sometimes he disappears for a few days and when he returns he does not say where he has been. For the neighborhood, he is a quiet boy, quite popular, who usually organizes “barbecues” at his house and meetings attended by people from the neighborhood and in which politics is not discussed. For the police, in the post-uprising era, he is a dangerous and elusive individual, vainly and tirelessly sought...

I finally found him, many months later, sheltered in a Latin American embassy, walking from one place to another in his forced confinement, smoking and contemplating through a window the city so close and so inaccessible. I saw him again several times. Tall and thin, with abundant black hair, an aquiline nose, and dark, penetrating eyes, he impressed me even in there as a determined, frugal, and extremely cautious man.

"I don't have to lie to you," he told me. Anything harmful that you tell me, I will say that it is false, that I don't even know you. That's why I don't care if you publish my real name or not.

He smiled without animosity. I explained to him that I understood the rules of the game.

* In mid-1958, Gavino wrote to me from Bolivia to express his disagreement with the brief portrait I drew of him, and whose source is other witnesses. He also denies responsibility for Lizaso's death, but I never attributed that responsibility to him. It seems clear that Lizaso knew something about the Valle revolution, and went there of his own free will.

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“They didn't have to shoot those boys,” he then continued. For me, go and pass, because I “was there” and they kidnapped documentation in my house. Nothing more than documentation, not weapons as they said later. But I ran away. And Gavino also escaped...

He paused. Maybe he was thinking about those who had not escaped. In which they had nothing to do. I asked him if there had been talk of the revolution.

"Not even remotely," he said. For those of us who were actually there, which was Gavino and I, a look was enough for us to understand each other. But neither he nor I knew if we were going to perform or where. We expected a contact that did not occur. I found out when Gavino asked me for the key to the apartment, because the police were looking for him. We were friends, and I gave it to him. It's possible that someone else came because they were cool and wanted to know something more.

His tone turned somber.

–The misfortune was that other boys from the neighborhood also fell, who saw a meeting at the house and came in to listen to the fight or play cards, as usual. Anyone came into my house, even without knowing me. Even two “strips” arrived that night and no one noticed. The truth is that I didn't know Livraga himself, the one the newspapers mentioned, nor do I remember having seen him. The first time I saw it was in a photo.

A question hung heavy between us. Juan Carlos Torres came forward to answer it.

–We didn't tell them anything –he explained regretfully– because the reality is that until that moment there was nothing. As long as we didn't have concrete news, it was a night like any other. I couldn't warn them, tell them to leave, because it would arouse suspicion, and I don't usually talk more than necessary.

“A few more minutes, and everyone would have gone home. Then it wouldn't have happened nothing."

A few more minutes. In this case, everything will turn around for a few more minutes.

# 10. MARIO

Mario Brión lives at 1812 Franklin Street. It is a chalet with a garden, almost on a corner, less than a hundred meters from the fateful house.

Brión is thirty-three years old that afternoon of June 9. He is a man of medium height, blonde, with incipient baldness, and a mustache. A certain melancholic expression perhaps emerges from his oval face.

A serious and hard-working boy, the neighbors say. A common life, without bright reliefs, without dazzles of adventure, we reconstruct. At the age of fifteen he took a job as an office worker, without abandoning his studies, he took English courses, which he became able to speak with some fluency, and he received his degree as a commercial expert. He seems to have set a life plan of precise stages and is fulfilling them. With his savings he buys land, builds a house. Only then does he decide to marry, with his first girlfriend. Later a son was born to them: Daniel Mario.

From his father, a Spaniard who knew how to make a living in hard jobs, he has inherited a diffuse love of reading. It is a surprise to find in his library Horace, Seneca,

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Shakespeare, Unamuno and Baroja, along with the cold accounting collections. There are also those books of inevitable American origin and with diverse titles, which can be resolved into one – “How to Succeed in Life” – and they indicate, above the dubious promised results, what Mario's aspirations were: to work, progress, protect your family, have friends, be esteemed.

It wouldn't have been difficult for him to achieve it. In the company where he was he had already been offered a section head position. He earned well: no comfort was missing in his house. His was every useful initiative born in the neighborhood. A little paved path that connects the corner of his house with San Martín Avenue remembers him. He collected the money, he gathered the neighbors to work on Sundays and holidays.

Mario Brión – people say – is a happy boy, kind to everyone, a little shy.
He doesn't smoke or drink. His only entertainment consists of going to the movies with his wife, or playing soccer with his neighborhood friends.

That night he had a late dinner, as usual. Then he went out to buy the newspaper.
He always does it too. He likes to read the newspaper, in an armchair, while listening to a record or a radio program.

On the way he meets a friend or an acquaintance. We won't know with whom.

“They want me to go hear the fight,” he announces to his wife, Adela, when he returns. I don't know whether to go...

He is undecided. Finally it is resolved. After all, he planned to listen to her too.

He kisses his son Danny – who is now four years old – and says goodbye to his wife.

–As soon as I finish, I'll be back.

He doesn't wear an overcoat despite the cold. She only wears a thick white knit.

Walk to Yrigoyen and enter the long hallway. A last-minute witness will see him standing near the radio receiver, smiling and with his hands in his pockets, a little isolated, a little absent from the other groups chatting or playing cards.

## 11. “THE SHOOTING MAN WHO LIVES”

Number 1624 Florencio Varela Street, in Florida, marks a beautiful Californian-style villa. It could be the residence of a lawyer or a doctor. It was built with his hands by Don Pedro Livraga, a silent man, already in years, who in his youth was a bricklayer's laborer and who later, with gradual mastery of the trade, ended up as a builder.

Don Pedro has three children. The eldest is married. The two men, however, live with him. One of these is Juan Carlos.

Skinny, of medium height, has regular features, greenish-brown eyes, brown hair,
mustache, he is a few days away from turning twenty-four.

Their ideas are entirely common, the ideas of the townspeople, generally correct with respect to concrete and tangible things, nebulous or arbitrary in other areas. He has a reflective and even calculating temperament.

He will think about things a lot and will not say what is not convenient for him.

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This does not exclude an instinctive curiosity, a deep impatience, not manifested in small actions but in the way in which one tries to adapt to the world. He has dropped out of high school at the end of his first year. Later, for several years, he was an office worker in Aeronautics. Now he works as a bus driver. Later, once "resurrected", he will accompany his father on construction work.

He is a good observer, but perhaps he trusts himself too much. In the course of the unique adventure that is about to befall him, he will capture some things with extraordinary precision and will even be able to draw very exact diagrams and plans. In others, he will make mistakes and stubbornly insist on the error.

In the face of danger he will appear lucid and serene. And once the danger has passed, he will demonstrate a moral courage that should be noted as his main virtue. He will be the only one, among the survivors or the victims' relatives, who dares to come forward to demand justice.

Do you know anything, that afternoon of June 9, about the revolution that will break out later? You have arrived home before the end of your work shift, and this might seem suspicious. But the fact is that the bus he drives – number 5 on line 10 with a route in Vicente López – has broken down, and the company will confirm that detail.

You know something? He will strictly deny it. And he will add that it lacks any precedent police, judicial, union or political. And that statement will also be tested and confirmed.

Do you know something despite everything? There are many in Greater Buenos Aires who are in the mood, although they do not plan to intervene. However, of the numerous testimonies collected, there is not a single one that indicates Livraga as committed or aware.

It is after ten at night when Juan Carlos leaves his house. Turn right and then he takes San Martín Avenue towards Franklin, where there is a bar that he frequents. It is cold and the streets are not very busy.

A certain indecision dominates him. He doesn't know whether to stay playing a game of pool or go to a club. dance to which he has promised to attend.

Chance decides for him. The coincidence that comes your way in the person of your friend Vicente Rodríguez.

# 12. "I'M GOING TO WORK…"

This Vicente Damián Rodríguez is a tower of a man, who is 35 years old, who carries bags in the port, who plays soccer as he is, who is heavy and yet plays football, who retains something childish in his shouting and discontented humanity, who aspires to more than what that he can, that he has bad luck, that he will end up biting the grass in a pasture and desperately asking that they kill him, that they finish killing him, sipping in large gulps of the death that does not finish flooding him through the ridiculous holes made by the bullets of the Mausers.

Vicente Rodríguez would have wanted to be something in life. It is full of great ideas, great gestures, great words. But life is fierce with people like him. Just winning it will be a permanent uphill battle. And losing it, an endless procedure.

He is married, has three boys and loves them, but it is clear, you have to feed them and send them to school. And that very poor house that he rents, surrounded by that dirty wall, with

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That uncultivated land where the chickens peck is not what he imagined. Nothing is as he imagined.

The feeling of power that his vigorous muscles give him can never be fully transferred to the objective world. At some point, it is true, he acts in his union and even becomes a delegate, but then all that collapses. There is no longer a union nor is there a delegate.
Then he understands that he is nobody, that the world belongs to doctors. The sign of his defeat is very clear. In your neighborhood there is a club, in the club a library. He will go there, in search of that miraculous source – books – from which power seems to flow.

We don't know if he can read them, but of Rodríguez's passage through the era of cannibalism we live in, the only thing left - apart from the misery in which he left his wife and children - is an opaque photo with a blurry stamp that says precisely "Library." .

Rodríguez left his house –Yrigoyen 4545– around nine o'clock. And he has gone out with bad foot He says to his wife: –

I'm going to work.

Is it an innocent lie to cover up another exit? Is he hiding something more serious, that is, his intention to intervene in the movement? Or is it really going to work? It is true that more than an hour has passed, but the street where he is walking leads to the station, and there he can take a train that in twenty-five minutes will take him to the port, where he could opt for an extraordinary work shift.

It will be difficult to determine. In this case as in others. On the one hand, Rodríguez is an opponent, a Peronist. On the other hand, he is a communicative, loquacious man, who finds it very difficult to keep quiet about something important. And he hasn't said anything to his wife, with whom he has been married for thirteen years. Not even a hint. He only told him: “I'm going to work,” and said goodbye in a normal manner, without any sign of impatience or nervousness.

On the other hand, it is worth observing his subsequent attitude. He is completely passive when he is taken to his death in the assault vehicle. A survivor who knew him well later observed:

–If Fatty had wanted, he would scatter those soldiers...

It can be assumed that he never thought that they were going to kill him, not even at the last moment, when that was evident.

The two friends talk for a moment. Livraga lent him a suitcase days before intended to carry the teams of the soccer club in which they both play.

–When are you going to pick her up? –Rodríguez asks.

–If you want, let's go now.

–By the way, we can hear the fight.

There are many who talk about that fight. For the South American middleweight title, the champion Lausse – who has just completed a triumphant campaign in the United States – and the Chilean Loayza will fight at eleven o'clock.

Livraga is a boxing fan and has no problem accepting the offer. So they head to Rodríguez's house. We don't know what excuse he plans to give to his wife, and in any case it doesn't matter, because he won't be able to give it. He stops fifty meters before, in front of the building with the sky-blue gates, he observes that there is light in the apartment at the back and says: –Wait for me a moment.

He enters, but it doesn't take him long to return.

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–We can hear the fight here. They have the radio on. –And he clarifies:– They are friends.

Livraga shrugs. It doesn't matter much.
They go down the long hallway.

# 13. THE UNKNOWNS

Is there anyone else in the back department? Without a doubt there are Carranza, Garibotti, Díaz, Lizaso, Gavino, Torres, Brión, Rodríguez and Livraga. “Marcelo” has been three times and will not return. Some of Gavino's friends have come and also left early.
We know of at least one neighbor, known to Brión, who, like him, has come to hear the fight and who at the last moment feels upset, leaves, and is saved.

The parade does not end there. Around a quarter to eleven two strangers show up and – if what is going to happen weren't so tragic – pose a comedy situation. Torres believes they are friends of Gavino. This one, they are friends of Torres. Only later will they understand that they are investigations. They remain for a few moments, circulating between the groups, exploring the situation. When they have left, they will report that there are no weapons in the premises and that entry is free.

Caution necessary. Because the configuration of the terrain is such that from the metal door that gives access to the apartment, a man armed with a simple revolver would dominate the entire hallway and make it difficult for any potential enemy to enter for minutes. If the weapon were a submachine gun, the position could be maintained for hours.

However, when the police arrive – who at that very moment are requisitioning a bus at the Puente Saavedra stop – no one will offer the slightest resistance. Not a single shot will be fired.

But is there anyone else, apart from those already mentioned? It will be difficult to find a witness who remembers everyone; those who could do so are absent or dead. We can only be guided by indications. Torres, for example, will affirm that there were two more men. From the first he learned that he was an army non-commissioned officer. Of the second, not even that.

Other indirect testimonies mention the non-commissioned officer again. And they specify: sergeant. The descriptions are confusing, divergent. It seems that he arrived at the last minute... Nobody knows who brought him... Almost nobody knew him... Someone, however, will see him again, or believe he sees them, hours later, at the moment when he is shot and killed. collapses

And the other? We don't even know if it existed. Not what his name was, nor who he was. Not if he is alive or dead.

Regarding these two men, our search has ended in a dead end.
exit.

It's just a few minutes before eleven. The radio is broadcasting the preliminaries of the boxing match. In the group playing cards there is silence when the announcer announces the presence in the square of the champion Lausse and the Chilean Loayza.

Meanwhile, Giunta arrived at the front apartment around ten thirty.

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The tranquility that reigns in Don Horacio's house is perfect. Mrs. Pilar chats with them for a few moments before retiring to rest. His daughter Nélida prepares some mates for the guest, while Don Horacio turns on the receiver.

If you tune in for a moment to Radio del Estado, the official voice of the Nation, you will see that has finished broadcasting a Bach concert and at 10:59 p.m. another one with Ravel begins...

At that time, at the 2nd Florida Police Station, twenty men have finished gathering for a mysterious procedure.

“Something big,” Commissioner Pena thinks when he finds out who is going to lead the men.

The word revolution has not yet been pronounced. And much less by Radio Splendid, which filters the murmur of the crowd at Luna Park and the tense voice of the announcer Fioravanti, transmitting the first incidents of the match.

It is a short and violent fight, which from the second round is practically defined. In total, it lasts less than ten minutes. Halfway through the third round, the champion knocks down Loayza for the entire count.

The owner of the house and Giunta looked at each other with a satisfied smile.

Giunta had a glass of gin and was preparing to leave. From the bedroom, Mrs. Pilar asked her husband for a hot water bottle. Don Horacio went to the kitchen, filled the bag and was returning with it when violent knocks were heard on the door. They seemed to have been hit with the butt of a pistol or a rifle.

In the silence of the night the cry resounded:

–The police!

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# SECOND PART

# THE FACTS

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# 14. WHERE IS TANCO?

Don Horacio is so disconcerted that he can't put down the bag. He runs, turns the key in the lock, and before he finishes removing the chain, the door is violently pushed from outside, the bolt springs and he finds himself impelled, surrounded, overwhelmed by the crowd of police and individuals armed with weapons. long and short, which in a few seconds flood all the rooms and whose voices will soon be heard in the patio and in the hallway, which leads to the back. Everything happens with lightning speed.

Tall, burly, dark-skinned, with mustaches, impressive with authority, he is the one in charge of the group. In his right hand he holds a 45 pistol. He speaks loudly, with a hoarse and thick voice that at times sounds like a drunk. He wears light pants and a short, olive green jacket: it is the uniform of the Argentine Army.

Don Horacio has stepped back, scared. He only manages to raise his arms, still not letting go of the hot water bottle that is already burning his fingers. The leader of the group snatches it away with a slap of his hand.

–Where is Tanco? -shouts.

The owner of the house looks at him without understanding. It is the first time he hears the name of the rebel general, whose dramatic escape, escaping the wall, will be known days later.
The boss pushes him aside and faces the other, Giunta.

Giunta is simply petrified. He has remained in his chair, with his mouth open, his eyes wide, unable to move. The boss approaches him and deliberately, delicately, places the gun against his throat.

–Don't act stupid! –he says with a deaf voice–. Raise your hands!

Giunta raises his hands. And for the second time he hears that indecipherable question, which has to keep repeating itself like a nightmare. Where is Tanco? *Where is Tanco?*

His stunned silence earns him a punch that nearly knocks him out of his chair. Also that left blow – protected by the treachery of the weapon wielded by the right – will be seen again.
It seems to be a favorite resource of the man who uses it.

The scene was fast, electrifying. Equally fast is the sequel, concretized in a crackle of orders:

–Take that old man and this other one out and take them to the car!

They don't even have time to protest. They take them out and put them in the Plymouth car at the Florida police station. Parked on the same sidewalk are a red bus and a light blue police van, with a mobile radio.

From the patio of the farm, meanwhile, a man – Torres – has escaped, and another – Lizaso – seems having tried without success.

The patio belongs to the front apartment, but has indirect communication with the bottom, through a small door that opens onto the hallway, in the ligustrina fence.

The episode is confusing, no two stories coincide. The summary that emerges from all of them is that Torres, accompanied by Lizaso, went to Don Horacio's apartment, by the usual route for him, to ask to use the telephone, which was also quite common. It was then that they heard and perhaps saw the arrival of the police.

Torres does not hesitate. The patio has a not very high wall. He saves her with a jump and flees

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through neighboring farms. In his desperate race, he crosses fences and roofs, tears his clothes, causes deep wounds in his hand and neck - he will never know how -, runs for blocks and blocks in a zigzag, finally takes a bus, until he is bleeding and exhausted. find shelter. In a way, he was the first survivor.

There are three versions about Carlitos Lizaso. The first says that he managed to get to a nearby pipe factory, where the watchman did not allow him to hide, and thus caused his capture. The second, that he was arrested in the patio itself when the wall collapsed under his weight. The last one, who didn't even try to escape. The only certainty is that he was arrested.

In the back apartment, meanwhile, the scene of surprise and brutality has been repeated. The police enter without encountering opposition. Nobody moves a finger. Nobody protests or resists. The guard Ramón Madialdea would later declare that “a revolver with mother-of-pearl grips” was seized here. That weapon (if it existed) was the only one in the house.

They make them go out into the street, one by one. And there the boss is waiting for them, who soon begins to spread new screams, blows and blows of the butt as they get on the bus. He hammers Livraga's stomach hard with the barrel of the gun, shouting:

–So you were going to make the revolution? With that look?

He told Carlitos Lizaso the same thing. He asks everyone's name. Most of them don't mean anything to him, you can guess in the disdainful gesture, in the “Come on, keep going!” with which he pushes them towards the group. But Gavino's seems like a revelation for him. His face lights up with joy.

He holds him tightly by the neck and with one blow he inserts the barrel of the gun into his mouth.

–So you are Gavino! –howls–. So you...!

His finger trembles on the trigger. His eyes shine.

"Tell me where you have it," he orders without appeal. *Where is Tanco!* Soon, immediately, because I kill you, I kill you right here! Look, it doesn't cost me anything!

The barrel of the gun rattles between Gavino's teeth. A trickle of blood flows from his split lip. His eyes are glazed with fear.

But he doesn't tell him where Tanco is. Either he's a hero, or he really doesn't have the slightest idea. about the whereabouts of the rebel general...*

Giunta and Di Chiano are taken out of the car and also loaded onto the bus. To last
At this moment, three more men are added, detained nearby.

* The reconstruction of this scene is based on indirect testimonies. Months later the
Gavino himself, in a signed statement that is in my possession, confirmed it with these words "... being mostly beaten, especially the one I signed, by the Chief of Police, who applied several blows to my head, mouth and nipple with rifle butts." left, until I fell to the ground, and he and several guards kicked me, shouting loudly, tell me where Tanco is or I'll kill you. When they got tired of hitting me, the Chief picked me up by my hair, pulling out a lot of it, saying: So you are the famous Gavino, tonight we will shoot you. "Then he searched my pockets, taking my identity card and about 500 pesos, which were never returned to me."

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One is the night watchman of the pipe factory. Another, a driver who happened to pass by there. He third, a young man saying goodbye to his girlfriend at the door of her house...

The bus, which is number 40 on line 19, sets off guided by its usual driver, Pedro Alberto Fernández, who was seized 45 minutes earlier.

The prisoners do not know where they are going, nor – except for one or two – why they are being taken.

But some will manage to overhear a revealing fragment of conversation between the guards.

“That one,” the man who directed the procedure, the soldier dressed in uniform, the impartial dispenser of blows with rifle butts and blows, whom everyone respectfully addressed as “sir,” while from a distance they gave him a more familiar nickname, that man He was the Chief of Police of the Province of Buenos Aires, Lieutenant Colonel (R) Desiderio A. Fernández Suárez.

*

Mrs. Pilar and her daughter believe they are living a nightmare that never ends. The house is still invaded by men who go through furniture and drawers, who question, who talk loudly. Orders still come from outside, dry as bullets.

They are called, however, to witness a rare interlude. It is the Chief of Police who returns, who picks up the phone and speaks with a changed voice. They are just a few fragments of conversation and a woman's name that they manage to hear:

–... With all success... Magnificent... It seems that in the south they also rose up... Tell

Cacho take care of himself... Yes, with all success...

Once the conversation is over, he collaborates in the search of the house. Nélida intends to get away from the bedroom where the Chief of Police searches through underwear for fabulous revolutionary plans, or perhaps for Tanco himself. But he makes her come back, “so that later she doesn't say that she's missing something.”

The first stage of “Operation Massacre” has been quick. It's only 11:30 p.m. At that precise moment, State Radio, the official voice of the Nation, stops broadcasting Ravel's music and begins playing Igor Stravinsky's record 6489/94.

# 15. THE VALLEY REVOLUTION

Far from there, the real uprising is already burning furiously.

In June 1956, Peronism, overthrown nine months earlier, made its first attempt would be to regain power through a military-based explosion with some active civilian support.

The proclamation signed by Generals Valle and Tanco based the uprising on an exact description of the state of affairs. The country, he stated, “lives in a crude and merciless tyranny”; it is persecuted, imprisoned, confined; “the majority force” is excluded from civic life; the “totalitarian monstrosity” of decree 4161 (which prohibited even mentioning Perón) is incurred; The Constitution has been abolished to liquidate article 40 that prevented “the delivery to international capitalism of public services and wealth.”

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natural”; The aim is to starve the workers into submission to the “will of capitalism” and “return the country to the crudest colonialism, by handing over to international capitalism the fundamental resources of its economy.”

Said in 1956, this was not only accurate: it was prophetic. Valle's proclamation was singularly devoid of hypocrisy. It did not contain the usual invocation of Western and Christian values or the insults against communism, although it did not ignore the assault on unions by “elements recognized as agitators at the service of ideologies or international interests.”

Faced with this analysis, the programmatic part was weak. It sacrificed, perhaps inevitably, ideological content to emotional impact. In short, he proposed a critical return to Peronism and Perón through transparent means: elections within a period of no more than 180 days, with the participation of all parties. Economically, the program typically contradicted previous criticism, by ensuring “full guarantees for foreign capital invested or to be invested,” etc.

The proclamation illustrated the two aspects that, in those initial times of the resistance, characterized Peronism: an obvious aptitude to perceive the evils it suffers directly as a majority popular force; and a notable ambiguity to diagnose the causes, become a fundamental revolutionary movement and definitively abandon electoral slogans and beautiful words to the enemy.

Of course Valle acted, and gave his life, and that is much more than any words.
Understanding his attitude is easier today than ten years ago; It will be even easier in the future; His figure will rightly grow in the memory of the people, along with the conviction that the triumph of his movement would have saved the country from the shameful stage that followed, this second infamous decade that we are living through.

The history of the uprising is short. Between the beginning of operations and the reduction of the last revolutionary focus less than twelve hours pass.

In Campo de Mayo the rebels led by Colonels Cortínez and Ibazeta have taken over the infantry group of the non-commissioned officer school and the service group of the 1st armored division; but the occupation of the non-commissioned officers school fails after a short shootout and the attacking group is isolated.* At eleven at night a group of non-commissioned officers revolt at the Mechanics School of the Army, but must surrender after a shootout.

In Avellaneda, in the vicinity of the Second Military Region Command, two or three skirmishes took place between rebels and police. They take some prisoners. Then they break into the Industrial School and surprise Lieutenant Colonel José Irigoyen, with a group that intended to install the Valle command and a clandestine radio station there. The repression is devastating. Eighteen civilians and two soldiers are subjected to summary trial in the Lanús Regional Unit. Six of them will be shot: Irigoyen, Captain Costales, Dante Lugo, Osvaldo Albedro and the brothers Clemente and Norberto Ros.
This procedure is directed by the deputy chief of police of the province, naval aviator lieutenant commander Salvador Ambroggio.

* A detailed account of the operations and subsequent repression can be found in the Salvador Feria's book *Mártires y verdugos,* published in 1964.

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The coups de grace are carried out by Senior Inspector Daniel Juárez. For purposes intimidating, the government announced that morning that those shot were eighteen.

In La Plata, a bomb thrown against a central shoe store seems to be the signal that the rebels are waiting to take action. In the 7th regiment, Captain Morganti revolts the company under his command. Groups of civilians take over the telephone exchanges. In the downtown streets, numerous dumbfounded passers-by see several Sherman tanks passing by, followed by trucks loaded with troops that speed towards the Second Division Command and the Police Department. In this one there are barely twenty poorly armed guards. Neither the boss nor the deputy boss are in it. The first is reviewing the furniture of Don Horacio di Chiano, in Florida. The second, directing the repression in Avellaneda and Lanús.

The most spectacular fight of the entire revolutionary attempt is going to begin. Around one hundred thousand shots will be fired, according to an unofficial estimate. There will be half a dozen dead and about twenty injured. But the rebel forces, whose material superiority is at first sight overwhelming at that time, would not achieve even the most ephemeral of successes.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred inhabitants of the country are unaware of what is happening. In the same city of La Plata, where the shooting continues incessantly all night, there are many who sleep and only find out the next morning.

At 11:56 p.m. State Radio, the official voice of the Nation, stops offering Stravinsky music and puts on the air the march with which it usually closes its programs. The speaker's voice says goodbye until the next day at the usual time. At 24 o'clock the transmission is interrupted. All of this appears in the Book of State Radio Announcers, in use at the time, on page 51, signed by the announcer Gutenberg Pérez.

Not a single word has been said about the subversive events. Not the slightest allusion has been made to martial law, which like all laws must be promulgated, publicly announced before coming into effect.

At 24 hours on June 9, 1956, therefore, martial law did not apply anywhere in the country. territory of the Nation.

But it has already been applied. And it will later be applied to men captured before his empire, and without the excuse of having surprised them with weapons in hand.

## 16. “LET'S SEE IF THEY STILL SHOOT YOU…”

The group with the Florida prisoners, meanwhile, has headed southwest. It crosses the boundary of Vicente López's party and enters that of San Martín. The attitude of the custody guards is either correct or carefree. Some detainees talk to each other.

–Why will they take us? –asks one.

–And what do I know… –answers another–. It will be from playing cards.

–It smells bad to me. The big guy said something about a revolution.

The most disconcerted are Don Horacio and Giunta. Because they didn't even play cards. Gavino, who does not know them but could illustrate them, remains silent. Disheveled

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and dazed, wiping the blood from his lip, he knows why they are taken.

They arrive in San Martín, leave the station and the square behind and stop on 9 de Julio Street, in front of a building with armed guards at the door. Some are already located. They are in the Regional Police Unit. The trip lasted less than twenty minutes.

For another twenty minutes, maybe half an hour, they sit on the bus before they are made to get off. They see people leaving the nearest cinema. Passersby look at them with curiosity. There are no signs of agitation anywhere.

At 0:11 on June 10, 1956, Radio del Estado surprisingly resumed its transmission, with the official channel. For twenty-one minutes he plays a selection of light music. It is the first official indication that something serious is happening in the country.

Meanwhile, the fateful house in Florida once again claims two unpredictable victims. Julio Troxler and Reinaldo Benavídez come looking for a friend whom they assume is there. They do nothing more than walk down the hallway and call the apartment at the back – strangely silent and dark – when the door bursts open and a sergeant and two security guards appear pointing their guns at them.

Julio Troxler barely flinches, despite the surprise. He is a tall, athletic man, who in all the alternatives of that night will reveal an extraordinary serenity.

Troxler is twenty-nine years old. Two of his brothers are in the Army, one of them with the rank of major. He himself perhaps feels a certain military vocation, poorly directed, because where he finally joined as an officer was in the Buenos Aires police. Rigid, severe, he does not compromise, however, with the “methods” – with the brutalities – that he has to witness and withdraws in full Peronism. From then on he poured his discipline and work capacity into technical studies. Read every book or magazine you can find about the specialties that interest you – engines, electricity, refrigeration. It is precisely a refrigeration equipment workshop that he sets up in Munro and with which he begins to prosper.

Troxler is a Peronist, but he talks little about politics. Those who knew him described him as an extremely parsimonious, reflective man, averse to arguments. One thing is certain: he knows the police and knows how to deal with them.

The description we can give of Reinaldo Benavídez is even more cursory. He is around thirty years old, of medium height, with a frank and pleasant face. At that time he owned a warehouse in partnership, in Belgrano, and lived with his parents. Something incredible is going to happen to Benavídez, something that, even set in that night of singular adventures and experiences, seems ripped from an exuberant novel. But we'll come back to it.

–By a singular coincidence – which will later be repeated – Julio Troxler meets the sergeant who has confronted him and who points his gun at him. Maybe that's why the two of them remained motionless for a moment, observing each other.

–What was there? –Troxler asks.

-I don't know. I have to take them.

–How are you going to take me? Do not remember me? -Yes sir. But I have to take it. Is an order I have.

The sergeant walks away for a moment. He goes to the front apartment to ask for instructions by phone. The two detainees are left alone with the guards. It is true that they are unarmed, but if they try they can perhaps overpower them and escape. Hours later, in more difficult, almost impossible circumstances, both will act with prodigious determination and cold blood. Now they stay still. It is evident that they do not suspect anything serious.

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And they just let themselves go.

Police posts have been in a state of alarm since early morning. In the second of Florida, Commissioner Pena has a receiver tuned in his office.

At 0.32 o'clock, State Radio interrupts the chamber music and, broadcasting on the national network, announces that a statement from the Press Secretariat of the Presidency of the Nation will be read, promulgating two decrees.

The dramatic announcement says:

“Considering that the situation caused by elements disturbing public order forces the provisional government to adopt with calm energy the appropriate measures to ensure public tranquility throughout the territory of the Nation, as well as the normal fulfillment of the purposes of the Liberating Revolution, For this reason, the provisional president of the Argentine Nation, in exercise of the Legislative Power, decrees with the force of law: “Article 1 - The validity of martial law is declared throughout the territory of the Nation.

"Art. 2nd - This decree-law will be endorsed by His Excellency Provisional Vice President of the Nation, and the ministers, secretaries of State, in the departments of Aeronautics, Army, Navy and Interior.

“Art.- 3o - Form.

“Signed: Aramburu, Rojas, Hartung, Krause, Ossorio Arana and Landaburu.”

The second decree, considering that martial law “constitutes a measure whose application must be regulated for the knowledge of the population” establishes the rules and circumstances in which it will be put into practice.

The commissioner has just finished listening to the announcement when they bring the two detained. And like the sergeant, he looks surprised when he sees Troxler, whom he knows and likes.

–What are you doing here?

The other smiles, shrugging his shoulders, and explains what happened without giving it importance. Surely a mistake... They talk for a few moments. Then the commissioner receives a phone call.

–They ask you from the Unit –and he adds–: Che, let's see if they still shoot you... A moment ago They passed martial law.

They both laugh.

But the commissioner remains worried.

# 17. “BE HAPPY”

0.45. In the Regional Unit they have taken the prisoners off the bus. They are taken through a long gallery and introduced into an office located on the left, where there are several green benches on which they sit. The building appears to be under renovation.

The walls of that room are freshly painted, and there are still some paint elements left.

At first they do not monitor the detainees, who make all kinds of conjectures.

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Livraga sits next to his friend Rodríguez and the first thing he does is ask him: –Gordo, are you involved in something?

Rodriguez shrugs.

–I know as much as you do.

Giunta and Don Horacio are perplexed. What intrigues them most is that question that they have heard repeated several times: Where is Tanco?

The three detained outside the house, in the surrounding area, burst into explanations and lamentations. One tirelessly repeats that he went to dinner with some friends, came back and was grabbed while passing by. Another, who was at the door of his girlfriend's house, saying goodbye...

The night watchman at the pipe factory, an old man who still has his rubber boots on, mumbles in incomprehensible Italian.

Mario Brión thinks about his wife, who must be waiting for him, without knowing anything: he never It has arrived so late.

Does Carlitos Lizaso remember that message he left his girlfriend? "If everything goes well tonight..."

Garibotti regrets having listened to his friend Carranza, who is dejected and silent by his side. Let's know now when they are going to be released, perhaps at dawn or the next noon... Carranza, in turn, remembers Berta's words: "Turn yourself in, turn yourself in...". Well, it's already delivered. The others may come out, but he... As soon as they ask for his background, he's in the clear. Maybe he thinks about that day when the Tucumán soldiers were shot. The door is unguarded and although the gallery is long, there is no one in sight. Maybe with a little luck... But no, Berta is right. It's time to surrender and do with him what you want.

They are not going to kill him, for some pamphlets and some conversations...

Gavino is worried. They're not going to let him go either, now that they have him. And he knows why they have it. He will get one or two years in prison, until the government leaves and they grant an amnesty. In one of those they send him to the south. Well, maybe it's better this way... now maybe they'll release his wife... and not kill him on a night like this. Will it have exploded...?

At that moment an officer appears and, addressing the two or three who are closest, asks: -Guys, are you political detainees?

And in response to the doubtful response, he adds: –Be happy. The revolution broke out and we no longer have communication with La Plata.

La Plata is the only place where fighting is carried out properly. The head of the uprising, Colonel Cogorno, attacks the Second Division Command and the Police Headquarters throughout the night. The attacking forces included the company of the 7th, three tanks under the command of Major Pratt, and two to three hundred civilians.

The tanks are positioned in front of the headquarters, but for some unexplained reason they only manage to fire two cannon shots at the building. Inside there are twenty-three men: later there will be thirty-five.

The shooting of smaller weapons, even heavy machine guns, is extremely violent, but the besiegers do not manage to launch a proper assault. Maybe they are waiting for something that never happens. The truth is that Colonel Piñeiro, from the inside, holds on all night.

The Second Division Command, two blocks from the Headquarters, is proportionally much more protected. He has about fifty men and a heavy machine gun

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in a dominant position – on the bottom of 54th Street, between 3rd and 4th – thus keeping the rebellious company of 7th at bay.

Among those men who are defending the Government with weapons in hand, we will remember one who did not appear in the newspapers.

His name is Juan Carlos Longoni. He is (was) a police inspector, a skinny guy, a stone face, hard eyes and few words. Dismissed from Peronism, he was reinstated in 1955. He became assistant to the head of the Judicial Division, who is Dr. Doglia...

That night Longoni is sleeping at home when he hears the first shots. He gets up and goes out dressing into the street. He hails a taxi and is taken to the fighting area. In the thick of the shooting, the taxi driver faints from fright. Longoni leaves him in the Assistance, he continues alone, and manages to get into the Command. Ask for a weapon and a combat position. They give him a Falcon and let him choose the position he wants. He fights all

night. That is the man whom seven months later the chief of Police of the province will dismiss – fired again! – for supporting Doglia in his complaints about this case. The case of the prisoners who were still awaiting their uncertain fate in the San Martín Regional Unit.

## 18. “CALM AND CONFIDENCE”

1.45. In the office of the head of the San Martín Regional Unit, Major Inspector Rodolfo Rodríguez Moreno, the radio is also on. The martial law decree has been propagated again at 0.45, 0.50, 1.15, 1.35. Now they're going through it again.

About fifteen minutes ago, Communiqué No. 1 from the Vice Presidency of the Nation was released, where for the first time the country is informed with some detail about what is happening.

> In the name of the provisional president – the text reads – the people of the Republic are informed that at 11 pm on Saturday there were military uprisings in some units of the province of Buenos Aires.
>
> Immediately the Army, Navy and Aeronautics, supported by the National Gendarmerie, the Prefecture and the Police, began operations to quell the attempted rebellion.
>
> The rule of martial law has been decreed throughout the territory of the Republic.
>
> The population is recommended to be calm and confident in the strength and consolidation of the Liberating Revolution.
>
> Signed: Isaac F. Rojas, rear admiral, provisional vice president.

One of the prisoners has asked permission to go to the bathroom; On the way, the guard who accompanies the whole of what is happening.

There is consternation in the group when this man returns with the news that definitively confirms all the indications, the suspicions, the fears that have been growing since eleven o'clock the previous night, when they first heard the word "revolution", in mouth of the police chief himself. Gavino turns pale.

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-What time? –he insists–. What time?

"It seems like just now," they answer.

Gavino breathes a sigh of relief. He knows they can't do anything to him. is detained before of martial law and therefore cannot have violated it.

Mario Brión has a disastrous feeling.

–Let's see if they still kill us...

Everyone looks at him askance. There is a silence. Then several people speak at the same time: -I went to dinner at a friends house, and when I came back..., when I came back...

–Is it forbidden to say goodbye to the bride? I didn't do anything, I don't know anything, they have to let me out...

In the inextricable Italian of the old watchman a word now stands out, hammered at regular intervals *“revoluzione... revoluzione...”.*

Two guards armed with carbines suddenly impose silence from the door. A barely perceptible but ominous change has occurred throughout the vast building. The previously carefree attitude of the guards becomes sullen, frowning. Voices, the clatter of footsteps in the gallery acquire singular resonances. Then, long silences.

Oblivious to everything, spread out on a bench, like a great black Neptune, Sergeant Díaz snores rattly. Its broad chest rises and falls with a slow rhythm. Sleep varnishes his face with an impassive mask.

The others begin to look at him with annoyance, with horror.

# 19. LET NO ONE MAKE A WRONG...

2.45. Rodríguez Moreno has a bad feeling. Why did these poor devils have to fall for him, precisely him? And yet, there is a mysterious justification, a faithfulness of destiny in the mission that is going to happen to him.

An imposing, tough man with an eventful and tempestuous career is Rodríguez Moreno. Tragedy follows him like a devoted dog. Already before 1943, being in charge of a police station in Mar del Plata, he appears complicated, according to versions, in a chilling event. A lineman is brutally beaten in a cell and then thrown onto a beach, completely naked on a harsh winter night. Die of cold. It seems that Rodríguez Moreno is being prosecuted and even imprisoned in Dolores. But then he is released. Because he was innocent, his defenders say. Due to political influences, their detractors maintain. The episode remains obscure and forgotten.

And now this. And later, at the end of 1956, again in Mar del Plata, where he was transferred as head of the Regional Unit, there will be talk of a similar episode. A Chilean pickpocket beaten to death in a cell. Does Rodríguez Moreno have anything to do with it?

They say no... But disaster follows. At the beginning of 1957, in a procedure directed by him, a security guard was riddled with machine gun fire by his own companions. An unfortunate accident, say the newspapers.

Next to him, that night of June 9, is the second head of the Unit, Commissioner Cuello.

A short, nervous man, about whom contradictory versions also circulate.

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–We are going to take their statements –Rodríguez Moreno says.

The detainees begin to parade individually, in two groups. One goes to one's own Chief's office. Another, to the summary officer's office.

Juan Carlos Livraga is restless. He doesn't want to believe that his friend Vicente Rodríguez has deceived him, but an intolerable suspicion runs through his head. That's why, when Rodríguez returns from testifying, he gets up quickly and passes by before they call him.

He wants to be questioned by the same person, to find out what his friend has said, to rely on his friend's testimony.

The interrogation is long, detailed. They ask him if he knew anything about the revolution. Answer no. He gives a detailed account of his arrival at the procedure house. He emphasizes that he has only gone to listen to the fight. An employee condenses everything into a couple of typewritten lines.

He shows her a stack of bracelets, light blue and white, with two letters stamped on them: PV. They ask her if she has seen them before. Answer no. The typist writes another line. They show him a revolver. They ask him if it is his. The question surprises Livraga.

The gun doesn't belong to them, but the strange thing is that they don't know who it belongs to.

Two or three more lines are added to the statement. The blade, a long blade, curves over the roller and falls back. Livraga notes that it contains other statements prior to his. In the position he is in front of the typist, he is nevertheless able to decipher some inverted lines. He calms down when he sees: “Rodríguez... coincidence... friend... fight... ignores...”. Rodríguez has declared the same thing as him. Other testimonies are similar. Giunta, the physiognomist, is questioned by a “chubby, curly-haired, American-style mustache” officer.

Gavino knows perfectly well that they won't believe him if he says that he was also in Torres' apartment by chance. Find someone to support you. He agrees with Carranza. And both declare that they are Peronist sympathizers, that they presumed the outbreak of the mutiny and went to listen to the news on the radio.

–What were you doing in that house? –they ask Di Chiano.

–What was I going to do... It's my house.

–What was he doing?

–I was with my family, listening to the radio.

-Nothing else?

-Nothing else.

They have Troxler and Benavídez since their arrival in another unit, without mixing them with the first. Their testimonies are the briefest. After all, all they have done is go and knock on a door.

–What are they doing with us? –asks one of them.

–I think they are sending them to La Plata –they respond ambiguously.

At 2:53 the national broadcasting network connected with the office of the vice president of the Nation, Rear Admiral Rojas, and he personally read Communiqué No. 2, informing that the mutiny at the Army Mechanics School has been controlled and that is resuming the Mayo Field Non-Commissioned Officer School.

“Let no one make a mistake,” he concludes. The Liberating Revolution will fulfill inexorably its ends.”

3.45. The interrogations have ended. Two officers stop to talk near the

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door.

"These things," says one, turning his head, "if things turn around we'll throw them out right away..."

But the matter does not turn around. Quite the opposite. In La Plata the shooting decreases. The rebels understand the impossibility of taking over Headquarters or Command: the race is eventually lost. A naval plane dropping a flare causes runs and desertions.

It is just a preview of what is going to happen when the first lights allow the flight of government machines. The marine infantry gets ready in Río Santiago. The Chief of Police himself has finally set out with reinforcements.

In the Regional Unit, the prisoners, nervous and sleepy, shiver on the benches. The cold is intense. Since 3, the thermometer reads 0 degrees. It looks like they're not going to move them from here tonight. Some try to curl up to snooze.

That's when they start calling them again, one by one. The first one to return explains that they have taken everything he had on him: money, his watch, even his keys. And shows the receipt they gave him.

Some manage to take precautions. Livraga, for example, who has forty pesos, hides thirty in a stocking. They give him a receipt for “A White Star watch, key chain, ten pesos and a handkerchief.” (Signed by Officer Albarello.)

Benavídez is received “Two hundred and nineteen and forty-five, documents and various elements.” To Giunta, fifteen pesos, a handkerchief and cigarettes.

The one who has the most money is Carlitos Lizaso. Several witnesses have seen him leave Vicente López that afternoon with more than two thousand pesos in his wallet. There were even those who advised him not to carry such a large sum with him. In the Regional Unit they record the delivery of only seventy-eight pesos.

Has he perhaps imitated Livraga's attitude? Could be. The truth is that those two thousand pesos will eventually disappear, in one pocket or another. And it will not be the only case. Only a small part of the loot collected that night – money, watches, rings – will return to their owners.

The atmosphere becomes increasingly heavy among the detainees. One thing is already evident: They don't plan to let them go.

# 20. SHOOT THEM!

4.45. It seems that Rodríguez Moreno was trying to buy time. It must not be very pleasant for him to go out on such a night to kill ten or fifteen unfortunates.

Personally, he is convinced that more than half have nothing to do with it. And even the others inspire doubts in him. Nervous parts are exchanged between him and the Chief of Police, who has already arrived in La Plata. The instructions are strict: shoot them. The alternative: to be included in martial law himself. It seems that there is even talk of sending a delegate with troops.

At 4:47 a.m., Communiqué No. 3 from the Vice Presidency of the Republic was issued:

“Campo de Mayo surrendered. La Plata, practically dominated. In Santa Rosa, the cavalry regiment is getting ready to reduce the last focus. Eighteen have been executed

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“civil rebels who tried to attack a police station in Lanús.”

The Marines and the Police School lift the siege of the Headquarters. The rebels disperse. Fernández Suárez arrives at the Government House, where Colonel Bonnecarrere has had to limit himself to listening to the nearby shooting all night, and heads with him to the Headquarters. They are climbing the wide staircase that overlooks Rivadavia Plaza when Fernández Suárez addresses a subordinate and in a voice that everyone can hear gives the order:

–To those detainees from San Martín, take them to an open field and shoot them!

It seems that it is not enough. Fernández Suárez must personally go to the transmitter.

Rodríguez Moreno receives the order. Unappealable. And it is decided.

# 21. “I GAVE HIM SIN…”

At the last minute, there are three who are lucky. The watchman, “the man who went to dinner” and “the man who said goodbye to his bride.” They call them aside, they return documents and personal effects, they set them free.

Rodríguez Moreno would later say that he released them “on his own account” and that the order execution included them.

They make the rest go out into the streets. In front of the Unit there is an assault car parked, one of those blue trucks with an open body on both sides and transverse wooden benches. Behind, a few meters away, a police van waits.

Next to her, a short man, clad in a raincoat, nervously rubs his hands. It's Commissioner Cuello.

The prisoners are ordered to get on the truck. Still someone asks again: –Where are they taking us?

“Stay calm,” comes the cunning response. We moved them to La Plata.

They have almost all gone up. At that moment a curious scene happens. It is Cuello, who on a sudden impulse shouts:

– Mr. Giunta!

Giunta turns around, surprised, and walks towards him.

Now there is almost an accent of supplication in Cuello's low, concentrated voice.

–But, Mr. Giunta... –he moves his arms a little, with his hands clenched–, but you

Was he in that house? Was he really there?

Giunta understands in a flash that he is asking her to say no. Just one syllable to let him go, to fix his situation in any way. Cuello's face surprises him: tense, his eyes a little lost, an uncontrollable muscle throbbing in one cheek ("He knew that I was innocent. It was a *sin for* him to send me to die," Giunta will later say in his graphic language).

But Giunta can't lie. Better said: he doesn't know why he has to lie.

-If I was.

The policeman puts his hand to his head. It is a gesture that lasts a fraction of a second.

But it's strange... Then he regains control of his nerves.

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"It's okay," he says dryly. Oh.

Giunta will not forget the scene. Over minutes and minutes you will be creating it without realizing it. He is already conditioned, unconsciously prepared for what may happen.
He has a professional habit of observing faces, studying their reflections and reactions. And what he just saw on Cuello's face is still shapeless, nebulous, but disturbing.

They're all up now. And again the enigma arises: how many were there? Ten, Livraga calculated.
Ten, Don Horacio di Chiano will repeat. But they haven't counted them. Eleven, Gavino will say. Eleven, Benavídez and Troxler will also estimate.* But it is evident that there are more than ten and more than eleven, because in addition to the five of them, there are Carranza, Garibotti, Díaz, Lizaso, Giunta, Brión and Rodríguez. Twelve at least. Twelve, Giunta will calculate, and Rodríguez Moreno will confirm it, who, however, mentions someone “with a foreign surname, similar to Carnevali, who later took refuge in an embassy.” Twelve or thirteen, Cuello declares. But Juan Carlos Torres, based on indirect testimonies, will speak of fourteen. And the chief of Police of the province, months later, will also talk about fourteen detainees in Florida. If those two additional men existed, one of them must have been the anonymous non-commissioned officer that Torres mentions.

And the guards? There are thirteen, according to a testimony. It appears that they are under the command of Corporal Albornoz, from the Villa Ballester sub-police station, judging by information obtained from another source. Is he the same one whom Livraga will later see in singular circumstances? We do not know.

One thing strongly draws attention. The police are armed with simple Mausers.
For the mission they carry out, and in the circumstances in which they are going to fulfill it, it is almost incomprehensible. Is this an opportunity, a “relief” that Rodríguez Moreno is going to consciously or unconsciously give to the prisoners? Or is it that there are no machine guns in the Regional Unit? Enigma with a difficult answer. The undoubted thing is that thanks to this fortunate circumstance – and other equally strange ones that we will see later – half of the condemned will save their lives. These do not know that they are condemned, however, and this unprecedented cruelty

must be highlighted in the table of aggravating and mitigating circumstances. They have not been told that they are going to be killed.
Furthermore, until the last moment there will be those who try to deceive you.

The security guards place the canvas curtains that close the body and the police car, followed by the van carrying Cuello, Rodríguez Moreno and officer Cáceres, sets off in a northwesterly direction, along 9 de Julio Street and its continuation Balcarce, which in turn continues on Route 8. It travels 2,100 meters – about fifteen populated blocks – before exiting to the first open field, which is about a thousand meters long. There the oblique route to the west.

*In his statement, Gavino names the prisoners, including “NN a young man, approximately 35 years old, blond and with a mustache,” who must be Giunta. But it omits Mario Brión. In contrast, the joint statement by Troxler and Benavídez (also in my possession) names “Mario N.”, but omits Giunta. The explanation that occurs to me is this: Gavino, Troxler and Benavídez did not previously know Brión or Giunta. Between these two, there is a certain physical resemblance. Seeing them at successive moments within the darkness of the truck, they came to identify one with the other, making two people one.

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The prisoners have no opportunity to observe these topographical details. They go as if in a cell, in almost complete darkness. The only thing they can see is the rectangle of paved road ahead that the windshield allows them to see.

It's cruelly cold. The temperature remains at zero degrees. Those who suffer the most are Giunta, who is wearing a simple jacket, and Brión with his white knit. They are sitting facing each other, on the left, Brión on the first double bench, with his back to the driver, and Giunta on the second, looking forward. One of the clasps of the curtain that closes the door is broken, and the fabric flaps with sharp blows, letting in a cold jet of wind, sharp as a knife. They both take turns holding her and speak in low voices.

–I think they kill us, Don Lito –says Brión.

Giunta chews on the incident with Cuello, but tries to console his neighbor.

–Don't think about those things, Don Mario. He didn't hear that they were taking us to La Plata...

If they could see, they would realize that they were moving further and further away from their presumed destination. Don Horacio goes next to Giunta. He also believes that they are taken to La Plata. In front of him is Vicente Rodríguez, silent and thoughtful. Gavino goes with Carranza. The first one fears. The second is confident. Also confident, secure, almost optimistic under the circumstances, Juan Carlos Livraga seems. He is a bus driver, he knows the routes well, he should realize that they don't take them where they say. However, he does not observe anything.

On the back benches are Lizaso, Díaz, Benavídez, Troxler... He is tense, alert, trying to spy on the slightest clue that will allow him to locate himself. He knows the guards well, he is used to treating them and commanding them. Why doesn't anyone want to look at it head-on? Julio Troxler must have seen something in them to feel so distrustful.

The truck enters a populated area again. To the left there are houses more or less scattered over a stretch of a thousand meters. Then they also appear on the right. The route cuts diagonally through lots and streets for another thousand meters. And suddenly it expands, it bifurcates.

Troxler almost jumped. He just recognized the place. They are at the intersection of Route 8 and the Beltway. Therefore, not only are they not going to La Plata, but they are heading in the opposite direction. And route 8 leads to Campo de Mayo. And in Campo de Mayo...

A singular incident interrupts his deductions. The driver has broken down. For him truck, go down, it seems to return. There are consultations with those who come in the van.

One of the prisoners – it is Benavídez – offers his collaboration.

"If you want, I'll drive," he says with complete innocence. I know how to drive.

They ignore him. The driver gets on. They start again.

“And in Campo de Mayo...”, thinks Troxler. But he is wrong. Because the assault tank turn right, at a right angle, take the waist path, go north!

It's incomprehensible.

## 22. THE END OF THE JOURNEY

It really is incomprehensible. What does Rodríguez Moreno think? Continuing west along Route 8, about ten blocks from there begins an open field of four or five kilometers, a true desert at night, which even has a bridge over a river... A scene

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perfect for what is planned. And yet, as it turns north, towards José León Suárez, it enters a semi-populated area, where there are only vacant lots three or four blocks long.

Is it stupidity? Is it anticipated remorse? Can you ignore the zone? Is it an unconscious impulse to look for witnesses for the crime you are going to commit? Do you want to offer a “sporting” possibility to the condemned, freeing them to fate, to luck, to the cunning of each person? Do you want to absolve yourself in this way, delegating each person's end to the hands of fate? Or do you want just the opposite: to appease them, so that it is easier to kill them?

There is at least one who does not appease. It's Troxler. And finally he has managed to get one of the guards to look at him and hold his gaze. But that anonymous vigilante does something else. With his knee he gives it a quick, deliberate, unequivocal blow. A signal.

Troxler, well, *you know.* But you decide to play a bold card, force a decision or at least less warn others.

-What's happening? –he asks out loud–. Why does it touch me?

Panic is reflected in the policeman's gaze. He is already sorry for what he did. The cape looks suspiciously.

"For nothing, sir," he answers hurriedly. It was unintentionally.

The truck has stopped.

–Get down six! –orders the corporal.

Don Horacio is the first to get off, to the right of the truck. Rodríguez, Giunta, Brión, Livraga and some others follow him, guarded by an equal number of guards. For the first time they can observe the surroundings. They are on an asphalt road. There is field on both sides. In front of them, on the side they came down, the ditch is flooded, and behind it there is a fence. The site, despite everything, is almost perfect.

But then a voice of order emerges again from the parked police van behind:

-No, here no. Later!

They get on and the march resumes. Troxler resumes his anguished silent profession. Now he tries to catch the eyes of the other detainees, combine with them, alert them for a desperate coup. But it's useless. The others seem stunned, resigned, idiotic. They still don't believe, they can't believe... Only Benavídez gives the impression of answering him. He is alert like him, tense and expectant.

The truck travels three hundred meters before stopping for the last time. And this is the definitive one. The seven kilometer trip lasted almost thirty minutes.

The same prisoners go down. Also Carranza and Gavino. Maybe Garibotti and Díaz. Troxler will later affirm that Benavídez, Lizaso and the anonymous non-commissioned officer remain with him upstairs.* Other testimonies are confusing, divergent, still contaminated by panic.

To the right of the road, dark and deserted, begins a small paved street that leads to a German Club.

* Or perhaps “Mario N.”, that is, Brión, whose last name Troxler did not know. But other survivors assured that Mario went down with them. The contradiction – typical of similar situations – remains insoluble until now.

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On one side the street has a row of eucalyptus trees, which stand tall and sad against the starry sky. On the other, to the left, extends a wide vacant lot, a slag deposit, the sinister garbage dump of José León Suárez, cut off by flooded ditches in winter, stinking with mosquitoes and unburied bugs in summer, corroded by cans and scrap metal.

They make the detainees walk along the edge of the wasteland. The guards push them with the barrels of their rifles. The truck enters the street and shines its headlights on their backs.

The moment has come...

# 23. THE KILLING

...The moment has come. This is indicated by a brief, impressive dialogue.

–What are they going to do to us? –asks one.

–Walk forward! –they respond.

–We are innocent! –Several shout.

"Don't be afraid," they answer. *We are not going to do anything to them.*

WE ARE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO YOU!

The guards herd them towards the garbage dump like a terrified flock. The truck stops, shining its headlights on them. The prisoners seem to float in a vivid lake of light. Rodríguez Moreno goes down, gun in hand.

From that moment on, the story fragments, exploding into twelve or thirteen nodes of panic.

“Let's shoot, Carranza,” says Gavino. I think they kill us.

Carranza knows it is true. But a very remote hope of being wrong keeps walking.

"Let's stay..." he murmurs. If we shoot, they shoot for sure.

Giunta lurches forward, looking back, one arm at forehead level to protect yourself from the flash that dazzles you.

Livraga opens to the left, stealthily. Step by Step. Dress in black. Suddenly, what seems like a miracle: the reflectors stop bothering him. He has left the light field. He is alone and almost invisible in the darkness. Ten meters ahead you can see a ditch. If you can get there...

Brión knit shines, almost incandescent white.

In the assault tank, Troxler sits with his hands on his knees and his body leaning forward. He glances askance at the two guards guarding the nearest door. It's going to jump...

In front of him Benavídez has the other door in view.

Carlitos, embarrassed, only manages to mutter: –But how... Is this how they kill us?

Below Vicente Rodríguez walks heavily through the rugged and unknown terrain. Livraga is five meters from the ditch. Don Horacio, who was the first to go down, has also managed to open a little in the opposite direction.

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-High! –orders a voice.

Some stop. Others still advance a few steps. The guards, on the other hand, They begin to retreat, taking distance, and put their hand on the bolt of the Mausers.

Livraga doesn't look back, but he hears the crank. There is no time for reach the ditch. He's going to throw himself on the ground.

–Front and side by side! –Rodríguez Moreno shouts.

Carranza turns around, his face contorted. He gets on his knees in front of the platoon.

–For my children… –sobs–. For my children...

A violent vomiting cuts off his prayer.

In the truck Troxler has laid out the arrow from his body. His jaw almost touches his knees.

-*Now!* –he howls and jumps towards the two guards.

With one hand he holds each rifle. And now they are the ones who fear, the ones who implore: –Not weapons, sir! Not weapons!

Benavídez is already standing and takes Lizaso by the hand.

–Come on, Carlitos!

Troxler puts the heads of the guards together and throws one on each side, like dolls. Give a jump and get lost in the night.

The anonymous non-commissioned officer (or is he a ghost?) is slow to react. He gets up halfway. From the end of the car a third security guard is covering him with his rifle. The shot is heard. The noncommissioned officer goes Aaaah! and sits back down, as he was. But dead.

Benavidez jumps. He feels Carlitos' fingers slip between his. With desperate helplessness he understands that the boy remains with him, buried under the three bodies that are falling on top of him.

Below, the police hear the shot from behind and for a fraction of a second they hesitate. Some turn around.

Giunta doesn't wait any longer. Runs!

Gavino does the same.

The flock begins to thresh.

–Throw them! –Rodríguez Moreno shouts.

Livraga throws himself headlong to the ground. Further on, Di Chiano also dives.

The discharge thunders through the night.

Giunta feels a bullet next to her ear. Behind him he hears an impact, a muffled groan and the thud of a falling body. It's probably Garibotti. With prodigious instinct, Giunta falls to the ground and remains motionless.

Carranza, who is still kneeling, has the rifle placed on the back of his neck and shoots. Later they riddled him all over his body.

Brión has little chance of escaping with that white knit that shines in the night. Neither We don't even know if he tries.

Vicente Rodríguez has landed once. Now he hears the guards running towards him. He tries to get up, but can't. He got tired in the first thirty meters of flight and it is not easy to move the hundred kilos he weighs. When he finally gets up, it's too late. The second volley flips it.

Horacio di Chiano turned around twice and remained motionless, as if he were dead. He hears the projectiles aimed at Rodríguez whistling above his head. One itches very

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close to his face and covers it with dirt. Another pierces his pants without hurting him.

Giunta remains glued to the ground for about thirty seconds, invisible. Suddenly he jumps like a hare, zigzagging. When he senses the discharge, he jumps again. Almost at the same time he hears the amazing whir of bullets again. But it's already far away. He is now safe.
When he repeats his maneuver, they won't even see him.

Diaz escapes. We don't know how, but he escapes.* Gavino runs two or three hundred meters before stopping. At that moment he hears another series of explosions and a terrifying scream, which pierces the night and seems to go on forever.

"God forgive me, Lizaso," he would later say, crying, to one of Carlitos' brothers. But I think
which was his brother. I think he saw everything and was the last to die.

Over the bodies lying in the garbage dump, in the light of the headlights where the acrid smoke of gunpowder boils, some moans float. A new crackle of gunshots seems to finish them off. But suddenly Livraga, who remains motionless and unnoticed in the place where he fell, hears the heartbreaking voice of his friend Rodríguez, who says:

–Kill me! Don't leave me like this! Kill me!

And now, they have mercy on him and finish him off.

# 24. TIME STOPES

Horacio di Chiano does not move. He is lying on his stomach, his arms bent at his sides, his hands resting on the floor at shoulder height. By a miracle the glasses he is wearing have not broken. He has heard everything – the shots, the screams – and he no longer thinks.
Your body is a territory of fear that penetrates to your bones: all tissues saturated with fear, in each cell the heavy drop of fear. *Dont move.* In these two words is condensed how much wisdom humanity can treasure. Nothing exists outside of that ancestral instinct.

How long has he been like this, like dead? He doesn't know anymore. You will never know. He only remembers that at one point he heard the bells of a nearby chapel. Six, seven bells? Impossible to say. Perhaps those slow, sweet and sad sounds that mysteriously came down from the darkness were dreamed.

Around them the echoes of the horrible carnage dilate infinitely, the runs of the prisoners and the guards, the detonations that madden the air and reverberate in the nearest mountains and hamlets, the gurgling of the dying.

Finally, silence. Then the roar of an engine. The truck starts up. To stop.
One shot. Silence again. The engine hums again in a meticulous nightmare of gears and reverse gears.

* Regarding Díaz... the deponents do not remember when he got off, but the truth is that when they did, Díaz was no longer in the truck; It is very possible that... due to the agents' carelessness, he went down..." Joint statement from Benavídez and Troxler.

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Don Horacio understands, in a flash of lucidity. *The coup de grace.* They are touring body by body and killing those who show signs of life. And now...

Yes, now it's his turn. The truck is approaching. The ground, under Don Horacio's glasses, disappears in chalk incandescence. They are lighting him, they are aiming at him. He doesn't see them, but he knows they are pointing at the back of his head.

They wait for a movement. Maybe not even that. Maybe they'll throw the same thing at you. Maybe they're just surprised that it doesn't move. Maybe they will discover what is obvious, that he is not injured, that blood is coming out of nowhere. A horrible nausea rises from his stomach. He manages to strangle her on the lips. I would like to scream. A part of her body – her wrists resting like levers on the floor, her knees, the tips of her feet – would like to escape madly. Another – the head, the back of the neck – repeats: do not move, do not breathe.

How does he stay still, to hold his breath, to not cough, to not howl in fear?

But it doesn't move. Neither does the reflector. He guards it, watches over it, as in a game of patience. Nobody speaks in the semicircle of rifles that surrounds him. But no one shoots. And so seconds, minutes, years pass...

And the shot doesn't come.

When he hears the engine again, when the light disappears, when he knows that they are moving away, Don Horacio begins to breathe, slowly, slowly, as if he were learning to do so for the first time.

Closer to the paved road, Livraga has also stayed still, but unfortunately for him, in a different position. He is lying on his back, facing the sky, with his right arm stretched out behind him and his chin resting on his shoulder...

In addition to hearing, he sees a lot of what is happening: the flashes of gunshots, the security guards who run, the exotic contradance of the truck that is now slowly reversing towards the road. The headlights begin to turn to the left, towards where he is. Close your eyes.

Suddenly he feels an irresistible stinging on his eyelids, a hot tingling.

An orange light in which fantastic violet figures dance penetrates his eye sockets.

By a reflection that it cannot prevent, it blinks under the vivid stream of light.

Fulmínea issues the order:

– Hit that one, he's still breathing! He hears three explosions at close range. With the first, a fountain of dust erupts next to his head. Then he feels a searing pain in his face and his mouth fills with blood.

The guards do not bend down to check his death.

It is enough for them to see that broken and bloody face.

And they leave believing that they have given him the coup de grâce. They don't know that that one (and another one that gave him in the arm) are the first bullets that hit him.

The hearse assault car and Rodríguez Moreno's truck drive away the way they came.

“Operation Massacre” has concluded.

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# 25. THE END OF A LONG NIGHT

The fugitives scattered across the night countryside.

Gavino hasn't stopped running. He jumps over puddles and ditches, reaches a dirt road, sees houses in the distance, enters streets he doesn't know, stumbles upon a railway track, follows it, reaches the vicinity of the Chilavert station, Mitre, miraculously finds a collective, take it...

He is the first to seek asylum in a Latin American embassy, in full force of the martial law. The terrible adventure was over for him.

Not so for Giunta, for whom an inexhaustible nightmare still awaited. As soon as he arrived in a populated area, he sought refuge in the garden of a house. Inside there was light on and movement. Almost the entire neighborhood of José León Suárez was awake with the shooting.

The terrified fugitive had only entered the garden when a window opened and A woman appeared shouting:

–Don't you dare, don't you dare! –and he added, turning around and apparently addressing the owner of the house –: Give it to him, since he is saved!

Giunta doesn't expect to hear more. The world must seem mad to you tonight. All They want to kill him...

He jumps over the fence and resumes his desperate race. Now avoid the zones busy, walks deliberately along dirt streets.

He can't avoid an encounter, however. There are three boys standing on a corner, watching him pass with curiosity. With a broken voice he tells them something about what happened and asks them for money, even if it's just a few coins to take any means of transportation and get away from that hell. In those night owls he finds a less hard heart. One gives him a peso, another a ten bill.

Giunta, like Gavino, arrives at the Chilavert station. Probably neither of them knew that that was the name of another shot, the defeated Caseros... He goes to the window and asks for a ticket.
-Where to? –asks the employee. Giunta looks at him in amazement. He doesn't have the slightest idea. He doesn't even know where he is. It must be quite a sight, this man with wild eyes, hair on end and face covered in sweat on this freezing night, who asks for a ticket and doesn't know to what destination.

-Where to? –the employee repeats, looking at him with curiosity.

–For anywhere... Where does this line go?

–To Retreat.

-That is. To Retire. Give me a ticket to Retiro. Receive the ticket. He leans against a wall. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. When he opens them again, there are three strangers on the platform looking at him, looking at him...

All three seem to be staring at the same point. Giunta lowers her head and reveals her muddy shoes, his pants torn from the escape.

But the train is coming. Jump up. The strangers climb up after him. Giunta begins to walk along the carriages. Two of those men have sat down. But the third follows him, almost on his heels.

Giunta works with enormous lucidity: he slows down his pace, lets the other practically touch him

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and suddenly he sits down – rather he drops like a stone – on the first bench he finds on the right.

The stranger also sits down. At the same height as the empty car, in the seat on the left.

Giunta does not look at his pursuer. He stares at the dark window, trying to discover the movements of the image reflected in it. He almost jumped. Because the Other –
Could it be a coincidence? – He does the same thing, he is “watching” it in his own window.

Will this night never end? Giunta is desperate. The train leaves Villa Ballester behind. The stranger continues to watch him surreptitiously. They arrive at Malaver. A few minutes, and they are in San Andrés.

Once again Giunta's instinct comes to his favor. In a flash it is decided. Let the train start moving, let it pick up speed. Then he jumps up, runs to the door, yanks it open, walks down the platform steps and jumps...

It's miraculous that he doesn't kill himself. As soon as he puts one foot down, the ground requires him to make gigantic leaps, which he has never taken in his life. In his dislocated doll's run – ten meters, twenty meters – he brushes against a ligustrine fence that leaves long scratches on one arm. But the train is already far away, it is lost in the darkness like a glowing worm.

And Giunta is – or believes – safe.

*

Julio Troxler has hidden in a nearby ditch. Wait for the shooting to pass. He sees the police vehicles driving away. Then he does something incredible. *Comes back!*

He returns creeping stealthily and calling in a low voice to Benavídez, who would escape with him from the assault car. I don't know if it has been saved.

He arrives next to the corpses and turns them over one by one –Carranza, Garibotti, Rodríguez–, looking at their faces in search of his friend. With pain he recognizes Lizaso. He has four shots in the chest and one in the cheek. But he can't find Benavídez.*

The bodies are still warm. Surely he does not see Horacio di Chiano, who continues to play dead at some distance. He understands that he no longer has anything to do there and begins to walk in the direction of José León Suárez.

He is almost reaching the station when he sees Livraga coming, staggering and covered in blood. At the same moment an officer from the nearby police detachment went to meet the injured man, shouting: “What's happening? What's happening?".

"They shot us..., they shot us," Livraga mumbled, between insults and inconsistencies.

* Troxler reports that “... he found on the road... in the place where the truck was, Carlos Lizaso, who was on his back, with half his body on the road and the rest on the shoulder... he verified that He was lifeless... he crossed the road, finding Rodríguez on the left side of the road that leads to the German Club; in the center of the street, next to a large pool of blood, Carranza, and on the right side... another corpse that he could not identify..."

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The officer grabbed him by the armpits, helping him walk towards the detachment. In it
On the way, he passed Troxler.

And for the third time tonight, the former police officer found himself recognized by one of his former colleagues.

–Hello, Troxler! How's it going? –the other shouts as he passes. -Good. You see... –he answers.

He is about to continue on when he sees a truck with Army soldiers approaching.
As always, Julio Troxler does the most natural thing: he goes to a small line of early risers waiting for a bus from the Costera and joins it. He doesn't plan to take the bus – on the other hand he doesn't have a nickel – but he knows that he attracts less attention there.

It looks like doom. Because the truck stops right in front of the queue. And without getting down, an officer

shouts: -Guys, didn't you hear some shots?

The question seems to be asked to everyone, but it is Troxler that the officer looks at, it is him who is leading, for a very simple reason: he is the tallest in the line.

Troxler shrugs.

–As far as I know… –he says.

The truck leaves. Troxler leaves his position in line and begins to walk. He doesn't have anything to take a bus with; An elementary sense of caution prevents you from asking a stranger for money, or even permission to phone your friends...

He is exhausted and chilled. He hasn't eaten anything since the night before. He walks for eleven hours straight through Greater Buenos Aires, converted into a desert without water or shelter for him, the survivor of the massacre.

It is six in the afternoon when he arrives at a safe haven.

# 26. THE MINISTRY OF FEAR

The “coup de grace” that they applied to Livraga crossed his face from part to part, destroying his nasal septum and his teeth, but without affecting any vital organs. His youth and good athletic condition provided him with incalculable service: at no time did he lose consciousness, although his face was swelling and it hurt a lot. The intense cold of the frost seemed to keep him awake.

Hear a new download. It is probably Lizaso's execution, the only one that seems to have had a formal development. Some evidence suggests that the guards held him until the last moment, formed a platoon in front of him and fired in the required manner. The unfortunate boy did not manage to make a flight gesture. Or more likely, in the decisive moment he preferred to bravely confront his executors. The truth is that he received the shock from the front, right in the chest.

When she hears police vehicles driving away, Livraga waits. It still doesn't move. Only after several minutes have passed does he try to sit up. He rests his right arm on the ground, he has another bullet.

From then on, an infinite ordeal begins in which fear and physical suffering begin.

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They will happen and they will become identified. There will be a time when Livraga will regret having been saved.

He manages to get up. Walk. He goes into the garbage dump, where he saw Giunta escape, looking for him.

There is something foolish and pathetic about this search. It's as if I can no longer believe in anyone in this world, as if the only one I can trust is that man who has gone through the same experience. (Much later he will finally meet Giunta – in Olmos.)

After a long cross-country detour, return to the road.

It leaves a long trail of blood. He approaches a town. There are some lights. See the railway station sign: José León Suárez.

A person tries to question him, but he continues, without answering. He is exhausted. It will fall. Someone reaches out to take him in their arms.

He is a police officer.

At that moment Livraga must have thought of an infinite nightmare where he would cyclically arrested, shot, arrested, shot...

However, he had finally met a human being.

The officer – whom we have already seen greeting Troxler – did not even ask him why I was hurt.

He hurriedly loaded him into a jeep, placed a guard at his side to take care of him, and, Getting behind the wheel, he sped off towards the nearest hospital.

On the route they passed the corpses.

The officer stopped the vehicle and ordered the agent to go down to investigate.

"They are dead," the policeman announced.

The officer turned to Livraga.

–Tell me the truth, kid, what happened?

Instead of answering, Livraga vomited a mouthful of blood.

The officer did not hesitate any more.

Leaving the agent standing on the road, he pressed the accelerator to the floor.

# 27. AN IMAGE AT NIGHT

Don Horacio does not know how long he was playing dead. Half an hour, an hour? His notion of time was definitely different.

He only knows that he did not move from the place where he had fallen until it began to lighten. AND By then it must have been half past seven. The sun on June 10 rose at 7:57.

He raised his head and saw the field all white.

An isolated tree could be seen on the horizon. Nine months later he discovered to his surprise that it was not a single tree, but the branches of several, cut by an undulation in the terrain, that produced that optical illusion. Incidentally, the detail proved to the writer of this – in case I had any doubt – that Don Horacio had been there.

The only place from which this strange mirage can be observed is the scene of the shooting.

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I lie.*

On one side of the “ghost tree”, on the edge of the town of José León Suárez, he saw the chapel whose bells he heard when they were going to give him the coup de grace...

He stood up and began to run with difficulty in that direction. I was numb. The cold was brutal. At 8:10 it would be three tenths below zero.

On the way he found a muddy ditch, insurmountable for him. had to start a zinc sheet from a pile of garbage and place it on the bottom, like a bridge.

He left the wasteland and entered the town. He walked about eight blocks. It seemed like two to him. He saw a bus coming along a cross street. It seemed red to him. It was yellow. He thought he was number 4. He was number 1.

Went up.

–Where are you going? –he asked, like Giunta.

–To Liniers.

In a small pocket of his pants he had saved a small sum from police voracity. of money. With it he was able to pay for his ticket. It seems like a fairy tale, they gave him a capicúa ticket...

He got off at Liniers. He entered a bar. He asked for coffee. There wasn't any, they were warming up the machine. He went to another bar. There they gave him a double coffee and a double beer.

Only then did it seem to him that his soul returned to his body.

*

How did Sergeant Díaz escape? We can only guess. The truth is that two months after the massacre he was alive, hiding in a house in Munro. There the Boulogne commissioner detained him. They sent him to Olmos. He is the only survivor I was never able to communicate with.

And “non-commissioned officer X”? Did it exist? Who was the man that Troxler and Benavídez saw shot in the truck? One of the twelve we already know, but unknown to them? The mystery remains to this day.

The massacre surely left five dead, one seriously injured and six survivors.

*

The sun had risen over the gloomy scene of the execution. The corpses were scattered in the vicinity of the route. Some had fallen into a ditch, and the blood

*I had been very intrigued by that topographical feature, which Don Horacio mentioned and which I had never managed to observe in my three or four visits to the dump. Until I went with him one day. And suddenly, after both of us looking for it for a long time, *I saw it.* It was fascinating, something worthy of a Chesterton story. Moving about fifty steps in any direction, the optical effect disappeared, the “tree” decomposed into several. At that moment I knew – a singular demonstration – that I was at the place of the execution.

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The stagnant water seemed to turn it into an amazing river where strands of brain mass floated. Some time later they emptied a truck of tar and another of lime there...

There were Mauser capsules everywhere. For many days the local boys sold them to curious visitors. In several distant houses there were impacts from stray bullets.

The first to stop by the road that morning were the unsuspecting residents who were going to their jobs. Then word spread through the town and a frightened and somber crowd gathered around the terrifying spectacle.

The most absurd versions circulated in low voices.

–They were students –said one.

–Yes, they were going to attack Campo de Mayo... –said another.

Most of them were silent. The men uncovered themselves, some women crossed themselves.

Then everyone saw a long, shiny new car approaching down the road.
He stopped suddenly in front of the group. A woman stuck her head out the window.

-What's going on? -asked.

–Those people... They have been shot –they answered.

She had an ironic gesture.

-Very well done! –I comment–. They would have to kill them all.

There was a stunned silence. Then something described a parabola and burst into a cloud of dirt against the polished bodywork. The first rubble was followed by another, and then a deluge. Roaring in anger, the crowd surrounded the car. The driver managed to press the accelerator to the floor.

Until ten in the morning the dead remained out in the open. At that time an ambulance came and took them to the San Martín polyclinic, where they were unceremoniously thrown into a shed. Rodríguez was riddled, Garibotti had only one shot, in the back.
Carranza, many, even in the legs...

The morgue's night watchman was used to seeing dead bodies. When he arrived that afternoon, however, there was something that impressed him deeply. One of the shot had his arms open to his sides, and his face fell on his shoulder. It was an oval face, with blonde hair and a growing beard, with a melancholic grimace and a trickle of blood in the mouth.

He had a white knit, he was Mario Brión and he looked like a Christ.*

The man was stunned for a moment. Then he crossed his arms over his chest.

## 28. “THEY TAKE YOU”

The police officer took Livraga to the San Martín polyclinic, where they gave him the first treatment. Juan Carlos did not lose consciousness: for hours, doctors and nurses listened to him repeat his story. He was then taken to the Recovery Room, located on the third floor.

* Verbatim words from the night watchman to Mario's father many months later.

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The nurses, risking their jobs – and perhaps more: martial law was still in effect – protected the wounded in every way imaginable. One clandestinely calls Juan Carlos's father by phone and tells him to come see him right away, because he is "broken down." Another hides her clothes; He knows that Livraga is telling the truth and presumes that the bullet-pierced sweater in the arm may be proof. Another hides the receipt from the San Martín Regional Unit, which would later serve as the head of the process.

Juan Carlos's mother has just had surgery in a hospital, and they don't tell her the news.
Don Pedro Livraga, on the other hand, immediately goes to see his son, accompanied by two cousins and his brother-in-law. And these four people sign a statement in the polyclinic's numbered entry book stating that they have seen Juan Carlos alive and that his condition, although somewhat serious, does not allow us to assume a fatal outcome at all.

Correct precaution, because that afternoon, or that night – for Livraga time is now the mere succession of pain – a corporal from the provincial police comes to take custody of him, and when he finds himself in front of him, he looks at him and stares intently as if he had not I would like to believe that he is alive.

Livraga finds the policeman's face vaguely familiar. He couldn't swear to it, but he thinks he's seen it before. Is it Corporal Albornoz, who commanded the platoon? The question is not very important.

But the corporal – a dark man – has a long tongue. Discuss with the nurses: –They are going to take this one again. Don't tell him, poor thing.

The nurses tell them. And the torture begins again.

The policeman, meanwhile, is looking for something. *The receipt.* Ask for Livraga's clothes. They don't give it to them. It becomes annoying, he directly demands that piece of paper that is proof of the crime. Nobody knows anything.

No one, except Don Pedro Livraga, who upon returning home that night found it mysteriously in a pocket of his coat.

And he keeps it, until six months later it reaches the judge's hands.

Meanwhile, Juan Carlos's life is suspended by the most tenuous of threads. There is no doubt that the provincial police want to kill him, the witness. But first he must resolve the “small” problem of the other survivors, who are fiercely sought after. If he can capture them all, he will execute them again, taking greater precautions... But if only one escapes into the network, it will be useless to eliminate the others.

Livraga no longer resists, no longer protests. When that night they put him on a stretcher and a
The nurse tells him crying: “Child, they are taking you”, he is already defeated. *So much pain to die one.*

They take him out covered with a sheet, like a dead person. They put him on a jeep and take him away.

*

In San Andrés, Giunta took a bus that took him to his brother's house, in Villa
Martelli, where he found refuge and relieved his nerves by telling the incredible story.

At night he slept at his parents' house, and on Monday, June 11, he went to work.
He thought his odyssey was over. When he returned to Florida that afternoon, however, his wife informed him that the police had come looking for him. She told them she was at her parents' house.

Giunta, who until then had behaved with complete lucidity, now commits a

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nuisance. He wants to come forward to clarify his situation. He went to surrender to his father's house.
He knew that they were waiting for him there, and in fact, he did not manage to enter because they stopped him before.

What happened from then on is a whole chapter in the history of our barbarism.

First they took him to the Munro section, and from there to the Regional Unit. They locked him in a kind of kitchen. An armed guard entered with him, made him sit in a corner and pointed a gun at him endlessly.

–If you take one step forward, I'll blow your brains out! –he informed him at regular intervals–. If you talk, I'll blow your brains out! If you make a gesture, I'll blow your brains out!

His vocabulary was rather limited, but convincing. From time to time, however, he encouraged him:

–Come on, move, so I can shoot you.

The prisoner did not rehearse the slightest gesture. From time to time the other seemed to get tired and holstered his weapon. But then he returned to his fun game. They were deliberately pushing him into madness. At guard changes, conversations took place in low voices, calculated to appear secret and at the same time so that the detainee could hear them:

–Tonight he “goes out”… –one murmured.

-Where *to!* –answered another with a chuckle.

–No one is saved twice.

They didn't give him anything to eat, except for a few sandwiches, at hourly intervals. When he wanted to sleep, he had to lie down on the icy tiles. Screams coming from outside interrupted his painful sleep.

–Be careful, he's escaping! Close all the windows!

It seems that they encouraged him to escape. After all, it wasn't that difficult. I was not in a real dungeon Giunta did not allow himself to be tempted.

Maybe they were inciting him to commit suicide. On one occasion they moved him to another room on the first floor, with window to the patio.

"And don't think about escaping out there," an officer told him, pointing to the accessible window. Because if you don't die from the blow... Well, it's an opinion.

From the first moment they tried to recover the receipt that was given to them in the same Unit in the early hours of the 10th. When the threats failed, they resorted to seduction. A young officer tried to persuade him with good reasons:

–Look, your situation is now clarified, but we need that receipt. You do nothing more than hand it over, and you go free.

Giunta denied having it, and told the truth. He had burned the receipt.

Two or three days after his confinement, Cuello, the second head of the Unit, came to see him and make a vague attempt to save him from being shot. Now he couldn't believe his eyes. It seemed to him that he was seeing a ghost.

–But how did he do it? –he repeated–. *How did he do it?*

Giunta was so unfocused, at this point, that he tried to apologize for running away. He explained that it had been an instinctive reaction, that of escaping death; that in reality, he had not wanted... Yes, he had not wanted to offend them. When he was transferred to the 1st police station in San Martín on June 17, he was a ruin of a man, on the verge of dementia.

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# 29. A DEAD MAN ASKS FOR ASYLUM

Had Benavídez died? His friends, based on Troxler's story, had hopes of finding him alive. On the morning of June 12, such hopes collapsed.

All the newspapers published a government statement with the official list of those “shot.” in the San Martín area.” And Reinaldo Benavídez appeared in it.

The most amazed must have been himself, since he had been saved...*

And yet, the explanation was very simple. We must look for it in the blind irresponsibility with which this clandestine operation described as an execution was carried out from the beginning to the end.

A simple reading of the list of those executed in San Martín is enough to understand that the government had no idea who its victims were.

Benavídez, who was in perfect health after fleeing the José León Suárez garbage dump, was presumed dead. Brión, on the other hand, who had fallen, was not mentioned at all. They called Lizaso “Crizaso”; to Garibotti, “Garibotto.”

It seems incredible that so many errors can be made in a list of just five names, which also corresponded to five people officially executed by the government.

The curious thing is that none of these macabre errors have been rectified, even after I reported them. Officially, then, Benavídez is still dead. Officially, the government has never had anything to do with Mario Brión.

But on November 4, 1956, the newspapers reported that the day before exiled in Bolivia Reinaldo Benavídez.

If the same.

The dead".

*

The relatives of the victims were not spared any annoyance, vexation or uncertainty.

A brother of Lizaso, who by reports suspected his tragic end, was wandering from police station to police station in search of concrete news. At seven in the morning on the 12th June, when the news had already appeared in the newspapers – announced on the 11th at night by Radio Miter – it went to the San Martín Regional Unit. There they had the bloody cynicism of telling him that they did not know Carlitos and sending him on a search that they knew beforehand.

*...from the scene of the events, he headed towards the northwest and after traveling about 500 meters, he approached a bus driver who has a stop in that area, requesting money, getting into his vehicle..." Statement of Troxler and Benavídez, dated in La Paz, Bolivia, May 9, 1957, addressed to the author of this book.

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sterile, to the Investigation Brigade. From there they sent him to the Military District. From there to Campo de Mayo, where the Chief of the Cantonment attended to him:

"The only thing I can assure you," he informed him, "is that no civilian has been shot here."

He went to the second in Florida, then to the Ministry of the Army. Nobody knew anything. At the Government House, General Quaranta refused to attend to him. Finally, an Aeronautics officer, Commander Vales Garbo, took pity on him, and with a couple of fulminating telephone orders he got the police henchmen to give up the innocent pleasure they were giving themselves.

*

In Florida, on the night of the 11th, a police commission went to the house of Vicente Rodríguez to collect the enlistment booklet of the murdered dockworker. His wife, who was still unaware of everything, received a summons from the Unit on the 12th for the next day.

At the Regional Unit they made her wait an hour before an officer attended to her.
She hadn't read the newspapers. She asked again about her husband, if he was in prison... The officer then looked her up and down.

–Are you illiterate? –he asked contemptuously. Record here. The advantages are stated
that gives the alphabet to martyr a poor woman.

“There were many people shot,” the learned officer concluded. *Among them, her husband.*

They took her in a van to the San Martín polyclinic. There was the corpse of
Vincent. He asked if he could take it to watch over him. They told him no.

–Come back with the drawer. And from here straight to the cemetery. Oh, and it has to be before Friday. If not, it won't find it. He returned with the coffin. And they went straight to the cemetery. With custody. Only when the last clod fell did the last policeman leave.

*

In Boulogne, where Carranza and Garibotti lived, the procedure was similar, although with a curious variation. The person in charge of collecting the enrollment books was a tall, burly, dark-skinned man with a mustache and a hoarse, thick voice. He was wearing light pants and a short olive green jacket: the uniform of the Argentine Army.

He no longer held a .45 pistol in his right hand.

He got out of a jeep at 7 p.m. on Monday the 11th in front of Garibotti's house.

“I'm here to look for your husband's notebook,” she said to Florinda Allende, without introducing herself.

"It's not here," she replied.

–Look for it. It has to be.

And he entered the house.

A son of the railroad worker, Raúl Alberto (13 years old), was sitting on the fence.

–Are you Garibotti's son? –the jeep driver asked him.

-Yeah.

–The one they killed?

The boy didn't know anything...

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The dead man's notebook did not appear and the tall, burly man crossed the street and hit Carranza's house. Berta Figueroa was still unaware of her husband's fate or the whereabouts of the notebook.

"I don't know anything," he said. He has to have it.

"Look for it, lady, it's here, because *he says it's here,* " the military-police official insisted.

Berta made him enter and went in search of the document.

Fernández Suárez stared at the large portrait of Nicolás Carranza that hung on the wall.

Around him, the boys looked at him timidly, their big eyes full of curiosity.

–Was that your dad? “the tall man” asked Elena, by order of whom the little girl,

Even if he didn't know it, he no longer had a father.

"Yes," he replied.

–How many little brothers are there?

“Six,” answered the girl.

–And you are the oldest?

-Yeah.

At that moment Berta Figueroa returned with the notebook.

–Is my husband in prison? –she dared, distressed, to ask.

"I don't know, ma'am," the police chief of the province of Buenos Aires responded hastily.

Aires–. I know nothing.

And he added from the jeep, with a hoarser voice than before: –

They ask for the notebook from La Plata. It's for a procedure.

*

On the afternoon of June 10, a young man, deeply worried, was walking towards the

Franklin Street, Florida. On the way he was stopped by a woman, whom he did not know.

–Are you something from Brión? –he asked him.

“Brother,” he replied.

"Stay calm," she said then. Horacio and Mario are fine.

And before he could ask more, the stranger hurried away.

It was news, the first, since Mario's disappearance the night before. Subsequent events would disprove it, but the mysterious incident was going to awaken – even in the face of evidence – the most cruel and irrational hopes.

Mario's brother-in-law soon found out that he had been arrested and went to the Regional Unit to ask about him. There –according to an indirect version– a singular episode would have occurred.

–What was your brother-in-law like? –asked the officer on duty.

"He was..." Mario's relative began, and suddenly fixing his gaze on his interlocutor, he exclaimed in astonishment: "See, he was just like you..."

Given those unexpected words, it seems that the officer was the victim of a nervous breakdown.

and burst into tears.

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Mario's body was in the San Martín polyclinic and his father went to remove it from there. They only let him see it for a few seconds. With one blow they retracted the sheet that covered him, with another blow they covered him again.

Months later, Don Manuel Brión received a mysterious phone call.

–Are you Mario's father? –asked a voice.

-Yeah...

–I want to talk to you about your son.

-Who are you?

–I am a sailor. I just got back from the south. I'll wait for you tonight next to the wall of the Mechanics School...

He mentioned the exact time and place. An unspeakable fear prevented the old man from attending the appointment. But since then he began to doubt what he had seen in the polyclinic morgue, and only the words, which we have already quoted, from the morgue of the morgue, confirmed it in the cruel reality.*

# 30. THE TELEGRAM GUERRILLA

Meanwhile, a silent battle was being waged for the life of Juan Carlos Livraga.

From the polyclinic, a jeep driven by Commissioner Inspector Torres takes him to the 1st police station in Moreno, where he is thrown naked into a cell, without medical assistance and without food. They don't make it into the books. So that? They are probably waiting to capture the other fugitives so they can shoot him again more calmly. Or they want him to die alone.

But his relatives do not sit still. One of them manages to reach Colonel Arribau. There are strong indications that the mediation of this soldier prevents the sentence from being carried out again. Don Pedro Livraga, for his part, appeals directly to the Casa Rosada. On June 11 at 7 p.m., dispatch from Florida the following collated telegram, received at 7:15 p.m. and addressed to His Excellency President of the Nation, General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, Government House, Buenos Aires:

IN MY CHARACTER FATHER JUAN CARLOS LIVRAGA SHOOTED EARLY DAY 10
ON ROUTE EIGHT BUT SURVIVED BEING LATER ASSISTED
SAN MARTIN POLYCLINIC WHERE HE WAS REMOVED ON SUNDAY AROUND 20
HOURS WITHOUT KNOWING NEW WHEREAS, HE ANXIOUSLY BEGGED FOR YOUR
HUMAN INTERVENTION TO AVOID BEING JUSTICED AGAIN, ASSURING HIM HE IS
TREATMENT OF CONFUSION BECAUSE HE IS ALIEN TO ANY MOVEMENT. COLLATE. PEDRO
LIVRAGA.

* The murder of Mario Brión was reported for the first time by me in “National Revolution” of February 19, 1957. That complaint put me in contact with his relatives, who still refused to believe in the irreparable. The investigations carried out, unfortunately, confirmed his death.

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The answer does not take long to arrive. It is telegram No. 1185, dispatched from Government House on June 12, 1956 at 1:23 p.m., received at 8:37 p.m., and addressed to Mr. Pedro Livraga, Florida, which says:

REFERENT TELEGRAM DATE 11 REPORTED HIS SON JUAN CARLOS WAS INJURED DURING SHOOTING ESCAPE WAS LATER ARRESTED AND IS FOUND HOSTED IN MORENO COMMISSIONER. CHIEF MILITARY HOUSE.

Juan Carlos's relatives fly to the Moreno police station. And there the old police trick is repeated. Juan Carlos – say the same employees who just saw him lying in a cell – has never been there. It is useless for Don Pedro Livraga to show the telegram from the presidency: Juan Carlos is not there. They don't know him. And they even put a professional air of innocence in what they say. Later, in front of the judge, the commissioner will say that no one came to visit him...

His family moves heaven and earth. Sterile. The boy does not appear and no one has news of him anymore. With the slow passing of the days, Don Pedro begins to get used to the hard idea. In Florida everyone assumes their son is dead.

But Juan Carlos has not died. He prodigiously survives his infected wounds, his excruciating pain, hunger, cold, in Moreno's humid dungeon. At night he is delirious. In reality there are no more nights and days for him. Everything is an uncertain glow where the ghosts of fever move, often assuming the indelible forms of the platoon. When, perhaps out of pity, they leave the leftovers from the ranch at the door, and he crawls like a little animal towards them, he finds that he cannot eat, that his destroyed teeth still have the lacerating possibilities of pain within that shapeless and dull mass that is his face. .

And so the days pass. The bandage they put on him in the hospital is rotting, it falls off by itself to infected bits. Juan Carlos Livraga is the Leper of the Liberating Revolution.

We would have nothing to say in defense of Moreno's then commissioner, Gregorio de Paula. It is useless for a man to try to hide behind “superior orders” when those orders include the slow murder of another defenseless and innocent man. But there must have been a remnant of pity left in him that night when he arrived at the cell carrying with his fingertips a blanket used until then to shelter the police station dog, he dropped it on Livraga and told him: "This can't be done, kid." ...There are orders from above. But

I'm smuggling it to you.

Under that blanket, Juan Carlos Livraga was strangely twinned with the animal that before it sheltered. He was, more than ever, the leprous dog of the Liberating Revolution.

*

In his cell at the 1st police station in San Martín, Giunta hears a long laugh, which seems to come from afar, rolls through the corridors and galleries and suddenly explodes next to him. It is he himself who laughs. He, Miguel Ángel Giunta. He proves it by putting his hand over his mouth and stifling the hysterical flow of laughter that bubbles up unnoticed from within.

More than once he has had to repress himself in this way, reason, say to himself out loud:

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-Still. It's me. I don't have to let myself go...

But then the whirlwind sweeps him away again. He talks to himself, laughs, cries, rambles and explains, and falls back into the pit of terror where the silhouette of Rodríguez Moreno stands, tall against the night eucalyptus, in his hand a gun that shines coldly, and men retreating, one, two, three steps, to aim with the rifles. And then the unforgettable and perverse hum of the bullets, the troop of the fugitives, the plop! of a projectile penetrating the flesh and the ahhh! torn that a man releases when he falls in mid-run, two steps behind him Giunta shakes his head in his hands and murmurs:

–It's me, I'm fine, it's me...

But every rumor he hears in the hallways renews his agony. “They are coming to take me away,” think. “Now they shoot me again.”

The dream finally redeems him. It's bitterly cold, but somehow he manages to fall asleep in the wooden bunk without blankets. At midnight he is awakened by the screams of the tortured, who “are being given the machine.”

However, no one cares about it. They don't even talk to him. In the eight days he remains in the dungeon, they do not bring him a single plate of food or a glass of water. It is the common prisoners, who go out for the statutory walk, who save him from death by hunger. Through the cell's peephole they throw crusts of bread and leftover food that the prisoner greedily picks up from the floor. To quench their thirst, they carry out an emergency procedure. They insert the beak of a kettle through the hole and the survivor gropesly drinks the stream of water that falls.

His relatives, meanwhile, have no news of him. The police play the fun game of blind man's chicken with them. From the Regional Unit they are sent to the Case-ros prison, from Caseros to the Olmos prison, from Olmos to the La Plata Headquarters, from La Plata to the Villa Ballester police station, from Villa Ballester to the San Martín Regional Unit. .. it is a week of anguish, until they finally find out the truth: Michelangelo is in the 1st
of San Martin.

They come to see him, but only the next day will they be allowed. And they will arrive in time – his wife, his elderly father, his cousin, his brother-in-law – to witness a pitiful scene.
They barely had time to hug him when they took him away. And they take him out onto the public road, with an armed escort and shackled, heading to the railway station. The pleas of his people are of no use, good bourgeois people for whom the mere idea of walking handcuffed through the streets is worse than death. There goes the strange group, at twelve o'clock in the morning, through the central arteries of the city of San Martín: the “fearsome” prisoner, the armed henchmen and the crying relatives who follow them. People watch this spectacle in amazement.

Skinny, bearded, with a lost look, a ghost of himself, Miguel Ángel Giunta
He entered the Olmos prison on June 25. There life would begin to change for him.

# 31. THE REST IS SILENCE...

The telegram addressed to Don Pedro Livraga, Florida, said:

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HEALTH STATE OF YOUR CHILD WELL IN OLMOS LA PLATA. IT CAN BE VISITED DAY FRIDAY DAY FRIDAY 9 AM TO 11 AM OR FROM 1 PM TO 5 PM. ONLY PARENTS, CHILDREN OR SIBLINGS WITH THEIR CORRESPONDING IDENTITY DOCUMENTS. CNEL. VICTOR ARRIBAU.

It had number 110, it had been dispatched from Government House at 7:30 p.m. and received at 8:37 p.m. It was Monday, July 2, 1956.

Juan Carlos was still in Moreno. But it is evident that the threads of his life already passed through the Casa Rosada and not through the La Plata Headquarters. On Tuesday the 3rd they transferred him to Olmos. And his parents – who assumed he was dead – anxiously counted down the days until Friday.

They finally saw it. It was difficult for them to recognize him: he had lost ten kilos, the bandages blurred his face. Since his arrival at the prison, however, he was provided with humane treatment and adequate medical care. In fact, he had already improved quite a bit in those few days.

Giunta was also recovering from his nervous prostration. At first he had suffered a lot from the contact of common prisoners. He then decided to talk to the director of the prison and tell him about his strange odyssey. The director – a kind man, who was later replaced – was thoughtful.

"Many have brought stories like that," he finally replied. But they are not always true. If What you say is true, we will see what can be done...

He ordered his transfer to the political pavilion. There Giunta felt better. The prisoners were communist and nationalist militants, labor leaders, even some journalists, and at least he could talk to them, although he was not interested in political and union controversies.

Then came Livraga. Giunta didn't remember. Juan Carlos, on the other hand, maintained a clear image of him. The common experience brought them closer. At first Livraga had preferred to remain among common criminals: he still feared for his life, and thought that he would go more unnoticed there. Afterwards his apprehensions subsided and he asked to go to the other ward.

The name of a lawyer from La Plata circulated insistently among the prisoners: Dr. von Kotsch. Cases were cited of detainees released thanks to their intervention. Dr. Máximo von Kotsch, a 32-year-old lawyer, actively involved in intransigent radicalism, dedicated his notorious dynamism to the defense of union prisoners.
Among them, the numerous oil workers tortured by the Buenos Aires police. Giunta and Livraga asked to speak with him, and Dr. von Kotsch listened with amazement to the story of what happened that early morning of June 10 on the outskirts of José León Suárez. At the event, he assumed the defense of the two survivors, and given the lack of judicial process – they were at the disposal of the Executive Branch – and of real causes that justified their imprisonment, he requested that they be released.

On the night of August 16, 1956, the prisoners in the political pavilion were preparing to go to bed, when the voice of a guard demanded:

–Population, silence! –and then–: Those whom I name, pass with everything.

A shudder ran through the pavilion. Some were going to be released, others would stay. Everyone listened eagerly, while those who were named collected

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feverishly his things.

–...Miguel Ángel Giunta... –recited the guardian–, Juan Carlos Livraga...

They were the last two on the list. They looked at each other in disbelief. They embraced. Then the same idea occurred to them simultaneously. Maybe it was a trap to kill them. But at the exit of the pavilion, leaning on a column, Dr. von Kotsch was waiting for them. He smiled.

Giunta says he will never forget that moment.

That same night the lawyer took them to the La Plata Police headquarters to endorse their release orders. In Giunta's, in the “Cause” category, there was an expressive line of typewritten scripts.

Without cause, in fact, they had tried to shoot him. Without cause, he had been morally tortured to the limits of human endurance. Without cause, he had been condemned to hunger and thirst. Without cause, he had been shackled and handcuffed. And now, without cause, by virtue of a simple decree that bore No. 14,975, he restored it to the world.

*

Giunta and Livraga owed their freedom and even their lives – in addition to the efforts of Dr. von Kotsch – to a fortuitous circumstance. They were not, as they believed, the only surviving witnesses of “Operation Massacre.” The Buenos Aires police had tried to capture the other fugitives and recover the evidence, especially the receipts issued by the San Martín Regional Unit. Having achieved that, it is likely that everything, people and things, had disappeared in a final and silent catastrophe. But the attempt had failed and “Operation Massacre”, even eliminating Giunta and Livraga, was going to be widely known here and abroad.

Gavino had taken refuge in the Bolivian embassy before the echoes of the last shootings. When he traveled to that country, he carried the receipt with him.

Julio Troxler and Reinaldo Benavídez could not be arrested either. In mid-October they took refuge in the same embassy and on November 3, a plane took them to La Paz. On October 17, a tall, dark-skinned man arrived walking calmly at the entrance to the diplomatic headquarters, at 500 Corrientes Street. Immediately, two plainclothes investigators jumped on him and managed to grab him. But it was too late: Juan Carlos Torres, the tenant of the back apartment, had just escaped from Fernández Suárez and was stepping on foreign soil. In June 1957, he also traveled to Bolivia.

Don Horacio di Chiano was hidden for four months before fearfully returning to his Florida house. The experience of terror had left deep marks on him. They had wanted to kill him outright. For endless seconds, he had waited under the headlights of the police van for the coup de grace that did not come. Without having committed any crime, he was a fugitive. He had lost his job after seventeen years of service and was now squandering his savings to support his family. He will never understand anything that happened.

Livraga and Giunta went back to work. The first as a bricklayer, helping his father; he second in his old job.

Sergeant Díaz did not completely escape the fury unleashed that June night. He spent long months imprisoned in Olmos.

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In the cemeteries of Boulogne, San Martín, Olivos, Chacarita, modest crosses remember the fallen: Nicolás Carranza, Francisco Garibotti, Vicente Rodríguez, Carlos Lizaso, Mario Brión.

In Montevideo, shortly after hearing the news, Don Pedro had died Lizaso, Carlitos' father. In his last days they heard him repeat incessantly:

–I am to blame... I am to blame...

At the end of 1956, Vicente Damián Rodríguez would have been the father of his fourth child. His wife, desperate and consumed by misery, resigned herself to losing him.

Sixteen orphans were left by the massacre: six from Carranza, six from Garibotti, three from Rodríguez, one from Brión. These creatures, for the most part committed to poverty and resentment, will one day know – they already know – that the liberating and democratic Argentina of June 1956 had nothing to envy of the Nazi hell. That's the balance.

But what in my opinion symbolizes better than anything the irresponsibility, the blindness, the disgrace of “Operation Massacre” is a little piece of paper. A rectangle of official paper measuring 25 centimeters high by 15 centimeters wide. It is dated several months after June 9, 1956 and is issued, after prior processing in all provincial police forces, including the Buenos Aires police, in the name of Miguel Ángel Giunta, the surviving shot. On the background of a light blue and white shield, his name and the number of his identity card appear. Above it says: Argentine Republic - Ministry of the Interior - Federal Police. And then, in larger letters, four words: *“Certificate of Good Conduct.”*

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# THIRD PART

# THE EVIDENCE

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# 32. THE GHOSTS

Rodríguez Moreno was an exhausted and perplexed man when at six in the morning on June 10 he informed the La Plata Police Headquarters by radio that the execution order had been carried out. Would you mention the escape of more than half of the prisoners?

He chose to remain silent.

Headquarters was not sleeping. He asked for the list of those shot. And now yes, Rodríguez Moreno no he had no choice but to send the list of the five dead.

-And the others? – Fernández Suárez shouted.

-They escaped.

We will never know exactly what happened in the Chief of Police's office when the troubled senior inspector showed up to give his report. Rodríguez Moreno, testifying before the judge, will say seven months later that “he was treated rigorously” by Fernández Suárez.

The Police Chief's problem is easy to state, difficult to solve. He has arrested a dozen men before martial law came into effect. He has had them shot without trial. And now it turns out that seven of those men are alive.

The actions he takes reveal that he understands his situation. The first thing he does is disperse the material executors and witnesses. He sends Rodríguez Moreno and Cuello to the Mar del Plata Regional Unit, and Commissioner De Paula (who has seen Livraga in Moreno) will later be sent to the Bernal police station.

On June 12, the newspapers published a list – provided by the national government – of five “shots in the San Martín area”, with the errors that I already pointed out. The news does not say who detained them, who ordered them to be killed and why, it does not even allude to the escape of the other seven. Interesting caution.

But Fernández Suárez is forced to speak. There are those who wonder why he was not at Headquarters when the assault began, why he left the building unguarded, why he returns only when the situation is defined. Some will insinuate that the Police Chief played both sides that night and that the shootings he later ordered were his alibi. He gathers the journalists and explains to them, according to the La Plata newspapers of June 11 and 12:

“That resistance was mediated by a fortunate circumstance, such as the fact that I found myself outside the Department. In the emergency he had traveled to the town of Moreno, where the accidental explosion of a bomb made it possible to discover in a country house belonging to the engineer Sarrabayrouse, of Peronist affiliation, an arsenal in which we seized 31 time bombs, of great power. I was in that procedure, on Saturday, when I found out that a clandestine meeting had been held in an apartment house in Vicente López, among which General Tanco was accused.

“The procedure allowed 14 people to be detained, but the aforementioned soldier was not captured. *"It was 11 p.m. and I was in this house,* I found out about the uprising at the Mechanics School and in Santa Rosa."

Not a word about the further fate of those people. Who was going to relate to a group of “shots in the San Martín area” with an apartment in Vicente López?

And yet, Fernández Suárez is already betraying himself. Because the fundamental thing that

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He says here, when no one has yet accused him, that he arrested those people at 11 p.m.
*An hour and a half before martial law was enacted.*

It seems that Fernández Suárez is going to sleep peacefully. For almost four months, no one holds him accountable.

But when the bomb goes off, it's not two thousand kilometers away, it's not behind a border that has opened and closed for three survivors.

It is in the same office as the Chief of Police.

At the beginning of October 1956 the Naval Information Service informed him, confidentially, that one of his own men has gone to denounce him.

Fernández Suárez does not have to walk ten steps to find the complainant. Is he Dr. Jorge Doglia, head of the Judicial Division of the police.

–Only case in my leadership –FS will later say, deeply regretful– in which a man from the street becomes a senior inspector.

That's true. For the police, Doglia is a “lord of the street”, the same as Fernández Suárez, who named him. A man of sincere liberating convictions (31 years old, intransigent radical at that time), lawyer Doglia has taken seriously that fleeting motto of the year fifty-five: “Rule of law.” But as soon as he takes office, he discovers that the detainees who testify before him complain of torture and show signs of punishment. He takes the problem to Fernández Suárez, who first acts astonished, then mocks him openly.

He then goes to the Deputy Chief of Police, Captain Ambroggio, and shows him photos of prisoners. who, apparently, have been whipped with wires. The deputy chief looks at the photos critically.

"That's not wire," he comments. That's rubber.

Now Doglia knows what to expect. The system is general, and the only thing he can do is document it. In August or September he meets Livraga. Then he goes to the SIN, and his game is exposed.

There is a stormy scene between the Police Chief and Doglia. Fernández Suárez openly threatens him. On October 10, Doglia reiterated his complaint, this time before the provincial government ministry.

Doglia's complaint consists of two parts: one refers to the torture system; another, to the illegal execution of Livraga. At this point, Doglia cannot know more than what Livraga himself tells him, that they wanted to shoot him with a group of people whose names he mostly ignores, and that he and Giunta have been saved.

Fernández Suárez counterattacks, accusing Doglia of “having gone to an organization outside the agency to report acts committed within the police.” A shameful summary is being forged, with the complicity of the Ministry of Government and the State Prosecutor, Dr. Alconada Aramburu. On January 18, 1957, Doglia's name will appear in the newspapers, between that of a drunken police officer and a torturing police officer. All equally dismissed “for ethical reasons.”

But Doglia has spoken with Eduardo Schaposnik, socialist representative before the Advisory Board, and at the beginning of December, in a secret session, the charges reappear, this time in Schaposnik's mouth. On December 14, it was Livraga himself who appeared in court, suing “whoever is responsible” for attempted murder and damage.

Fernández Suárez sees ghosts appear. On December 18, in a burst of audacity, he appeared before the Advisory Board to refute Schaposnik.

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# 33. FERNÁNDEZ SUÁREZ CONFESSES

*–Here there are charges* –exclaimed Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez–, *but no evidence!*

It was eleven in the morning on December 18, 1956. The government minister and the six members of the provincial Advisory Board, meeting in secret session, were listening to the police chief's report in response to Schaposnik's accusations. .

"Here a series of circumstances are mentioned," Fernández Suárez continued with a passionate accent, "but it is not said who made them, when they occurred, what evidence there may be... It *is necessary to have the proof, because if not, we would also have to separate the police chief!*

What happens next is very curious. Until that moment, in fact, there is no evidence of the clandestine execution. There is nothing more than Livraga's complaint, against "whoever is responsible", and the statements of Fernández Suárez, lost in the newspapers of June 1956, which no one has thought to look for. But now it is the police chief who, driven by a dark self-accusing fatality, confirms and expands on those statements.

It is he, then, who gives the proof he claims.

Here I want to ask the reader to disbelieve what I have narrated, to distrust the sound of the words, the possible verbal tricks that any journalist resorts to when he wants to prove something, and to believe only in what, agreeing with me, Fernández said Suarez.

Start by doubting the very existence of those men whom, according to my version, the police chief in Florida arrested on the night of June 9, 1956. And listen to Fernández Suárez before the Advisory Board on December 18, 1956 , according to the shorthand version:

> REGARDING MR. LIVRAGA, I WANT TO NOTE THAT ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 9, I RECEIVED THE ORDER TO PERSONALLY RAISE A HOUSE... ON THAT PROPERTY I FOUND FOURTEEN PEOPLE... AMONG THEM WAS THIS MAN.

So those people existed, and among them was Livraga. But I have claimed that he detained those men *before* martial law came into effect. And to determine the time when it was promulgated, I have not limited myself to consulting the newspapers of June 10, 1956, which, unanimously, report that it was announced at 0:30 that day. I have gone further, I have looked for the State Radio announcers' book, and I have photocopied it, to prove, to the minute, that martial law was made public at 0:32 on June 10.

And when I maintain that the Chief of Police arrested those men an hour and a half before, and technically a day before, that is to say at 11 pm on June 9, the reader does not accept my word, but accept that of the Chief of Police before the Advisory Board:

> AT 11 PM I RAIDED THAT PROPERTY IN PERSON...

And when I say that those men did not intervene in the riot of June 9, 1956,
extreme the reader's doubts. But give credit to Fernández Suárez when he declares:

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...THESE PEOPLE... WERE ABOUT TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTS...

*Was.* That is, he had not participated. I have also said that those men did not resist. And Fernández Suárez says:

...THEY DID NOT HAVE TIME TO RESIST...

Because they didn't have time, or because they didn't think to do it, the truth is that they didn't resist.

I do not want to be accused of Jesuitically extracting the part of Fernández Suárez's report that refers to the Livraga case and making him say what he did not say. I am going to reproduce it in its entirety because it constitutes, more than a defense, the proof that he demanded.

> With respect to this Mr. Livraga, I want to point out that on the night of June 9 I received the order to personally raid a house where General Tanco was with the leaders of the group that were going to attack the Mechanics School. At 11 p.m. I raided that property in person. I was half an hour late; If I had done it a little earlier, I would have taken General Tanco prisoner. In that property I found fourteen people, who did not have time to resist – they were armed with Colt pistols – because we entered through the doors and windows.
> Among them was that man. When I found out what was happening in La Plata, I moved to the Headquarters and put these gentlemen at the disposal of the commissioner. That morning the Executive Branch ordered the execution of these people who were about to participate in these acts or had assumed some revolutionary attitude.

It will be observed that, apart from the points of agreement, the first dissidences appear. They have no value from a legal point of view. It should be noted, however, that the provincial Police Chief has not found, nor will he find, witnesses who have seen former General Tanco inside that house. He has not proven, nor will he be able to prove, that these men were armed with Colt pistols. Because here – repeating his fortunate expression – there are charges, but no evidence.

> This man, Fernández Suárez continued, escaped from the police. Later, the father sent a telegram to the President of the Republic, saying that his son was admitted to a hospital, seriously injured by the police. If the police had wanted to kill him, they would not have left him injured, since there was a decree for his execution. Consequently, he ran away.
> Later, on that night of confusion, it is not known where he acted. He can say that the police have injured him, but it is striking that if there was an order for his execution, they would not have executed him.

The version that Fernández Suárez gives about the particular case of Livraga is simply childish. He tries to make it believe that he was not shot. But against the sole word of Fernández Suárez stands not only the overwhelming circumstantial evidence, which includes Livraga's scars, the receipt issued in his name by the UR San Martín that appears in the judicial file and the statements of doctors and nurses who attended at the San Martín polyclinic on the morning of June 10, but the testimonies of the remaining survivors.

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The important thing is that based on Fernández Suárez's own confession,
DEFINITELY TESTED:

1. That on June 9, 1956, he personally detained a group of men, among whom was Livraga.

2. That the arrest of these men occurred at 11 p.m. on June 9, that is,
an hour and a half before martial law was enacted.

3. That those men had not participated in the mutiny.

4. That these men did not offer any kind of resistance to arrest.

5. That at dawn those men were shot, “by order of the Executive Branch,” according to Fernández Suárez.

# 34. THE LIVRAGA FILE

The facts that I recount in this book were systematically denied, or disfigured, by
the government of the Liberating Revolution.

The first official version is the telegram addressed to Livraga's father, on June 12, 1956, by the head of the Military House, Captain Manrique, where it is said that Juan Carlos was “injured during a shootout.”

We already saw what that shooting consisted of.

Fernández Suárez pretended that Livraga had not been shot, or even wounded.

In the summary prepared against Dr. Doglia, the provincial Government Ministry alleged that Livraga fled "moments before his execution" and added with true candor: "it being uncertain that shots of any kind were fired at him."

That same summary later admits that Livraga “had injuries,” but takes them
as “evidence of his active participation in the revolutionary movement.”

It was a nice way to reverse the test. Livraga's wounds did not prove that
would have been shot, but he was a revolutionary...

There were other tricks, denials, statements. I destroyed them one by one in the campaign journalistic. Its analysis is now unnecessary.

The evidence gathered in several months of investigation allowed me to accuse Fernández Suárez of murder, something I did to the point of monotony, without him deigning to sue me.

There was something, however, that was missing in that evidence, and it was the file prepared in La Silver by Judge Belisario Hueyo, following Livraga's complaint.

I knew the general tenor of that file, but I only had a copy in my hands
photographic when the first edition of this book was published (1957).

I was then able to compare the two investigations, the one the judge did and the one I did. They practically overlap and complete each other. In some ways, mine was more detailed: it included statements signed by survivors. Troxler, Benavídez and Gavino, who were in Bolivia and whom Dr. Hueyo could not take a statement; interrogations of Horacio di Chiano, Torres, “Marcelo”, dozens of minor witnesses who did not pass through the judicial office; and a photostat copy of the State Radio announcers' book, establishing the time martial law was enacted. In other respects, the

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Livraga file goes further than I could have imagined. In addition to being the official history of the case, it contains the confessions of the material executors.

It is that file, then, that from the second edition (1964) onwards I invoke as evidence.

My personal experience with judges, as a journalist, has not been encouraging.
I could name a dozen whom I know as factional, inept, or simply corrupt. I prefer to point out the action taken by Judge Hueyo in this case as an example of decision, speed and effectiveness.

It is a true research model. Honor the justice of this country.

The Livraga file began on December 14, 1956, with her complaint before Judge Dr. Viglione, who five days later, for reasons of jurisdiction, sent her to Dr. Hueyo.

It is a detailed account of his arrest, transfer to the UR San Martín, frustrated execution, brief stay at the San Martín polyclinic, imprisonment in Moreno, healing in Olmos. It includes material evidence: a square piece of paper dated June 10, 1956 at the UR San Martín, where, with the signature of three officers, it is stated that that night they took from Livraga “a White Star watch, a key chain, ten pesos and a handkerchief.” ”.

The complaint contains three errors, which were going to make the judge's investigation (and my own) difficult. He says that there were five detainees in the back apartment of the Florida house, when there were at least eight. He says that there were ten who were taken to be shot in the assault car, when there were at least twelve. He claims that there were two (he and Giunta) who survived, when in reality there were seven. Of the others I only knew Vicente Rodríguez, who has died. And about the executioners, he only knows that they were police officers from the province.

The description of places and events, on the other hand, has a photographic accuracy.

On December 24, Dr. Hueyo dictates the first orders: to ask the head of the Military House "on the basis of which reports the telegram was written" stating that Livraga was wounded during a shootout; issue a letter to the Chief of Police to report whether Livraga was detained in mid-June at the UR San Martín and in Moreno, then in Olmos “and at the disposal of which judge he was in”; request the same reports from the head of the UR San Martín, the commissioner of Moreno, and the director of the Olmos prison; and finally ask the San Martín polyclinic if Livraga was treated there (pages 26).

The head of the Military House, Captain Manrique, was a busy man: he never answered. Fernández Suárez will only do so a month later when the complicity of the central government has been assured.

On the other hand, the response from the UR San Martín arrives immediately: “As of this date, I inform you that there is no record of the arrest of Juan Carlos Livraga.” Sign the telegram (fs. 27) O. de Bellis, who has replaced Rodríguez Moreno as head of the unit.

The new commissioner of Moreno, for his part, responds with a sibylline dispatch: “Referent complaint 3702 was filed by Juan Carlos Livraga, who was informed by SS that this department does not have records in books for the named reason for arrest.” Signature F. Ferrairone.

Judge's reply:

The Moreno police commissioner has not informed whether or not Juan remained detained.
Carlos Livraga in that police station, give him a new letter so that, as an urgent matter,

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> Specifically, determine whether the named Juan Carlos Livraga, in mid-June ppdo., remained detained in that unit, if so, dates of entry and exit, and at the disposal of which judge he was at.

The Moreno police station insists on its ignorance: “Detention reference Juan Carlos Livraga informed SS that there are no records of his arrest in this department.
“Ferrairone.”

Was the story of the alleged execution false then? The doubt begins to dissipate on page 29, when Dr. Marcelo Méndez Casariego, from the San Martín polyclinic, responds in a note:

> With reference to your telegram dated the 24th of this month requesting information on Mr. Juan Carlos Livraga, this intervention informs you that the aforementioned man was brought to the guard on June 10 of the current year, at 7:45 a.m., taking charge from its custody the San Martín Regional Unit, of the police of the province of Buenos Aires, who removed it at 9:00 p.m. on the same day.

But neither De Bellis nor Ferrairone were lying. The arrest of Livraga or his companions did not appear in the books of San Martín and Moreno, for the simple reason that the formality of granting them entry was not completed, without which an arrest becomes a simple kidnapping. The entire operation therefore bears the indelible stamp of clandestinity.

When responding, on behalf of Aramburu, to one of the desperate letters that Livraga's father sent him when he did not know the whereabouts of his son, the secretary general of the presidency, Colonel Víctor Arribau, had informed him by telegram of June 29, 1956: “Urgent investigation begins.” Now, Judge Hueyo, on page 32, orders that a warrant be issued for Colonel Arribau to report on the “result of the investigation alluded to in the telegram on pages. 8, and if possible, send the summary ad effectum videndi.”

The answer, of course, never came. But in the meantime the journalistic campaign that I had just started produced its first result. Livraga's complaint had reached me on December 20. I gave it to Leónidas Barletta, who published it in “Propósitos” on the 23rd. The intervention in the province and the Chief of Police believed they were obliged to launch a detonating statement, which was published in the newspapers of the 27th and 28th. Judge Hueyo did not he missed the opportunity. Page 33 states: “Attentive to what was stated by the Chief of Police, according to what appeared in the newspaper 'El Plata' on December 28, in the sense that he himself (Juan Carlos Livraga) was arrested for his participation in the subversive events of June 9 ppdo. in San Martin; It was found that he was a member of the group of people who received orders from former General Tanco and who were covered by the provisions of martial law; Please request that the Chief of Police make it known before which judge the corresponding summary was investigated.”

Fernández Suárez did not answer. He had been the only judge.

On page 35, for the first time, the provincial police respond to a court request.
The Documents Division forwards Livraga's medical record showing that he was arrested on June 9, 1956, one day before martial law was enacted.

Meanwhile, Colonel Aniceto Casco, general director of penal establishments, gives

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a new confirmation of Livraga's story by reporting that “he entered Unit 1 (Olmos prison) on July 3, 1956.”

On January 8, 1957, Commissioner Ovidio R. de Bellis appeared before the court. Rodríguez Moreno's successor at the UR San Martín declares that he knows nothing about what happened, because he was not there on that date, and reaffirms that Livraga's arrest does not appear in the Unit's books.

The judge shows him the receipt. De Bellis claims that this form “is not the one usually used as a receipt for detainees' effects” and that “it cannot indicate who the signatures that sign it belong to.” Asked about the shootings, he responded that “the person who was head of the Regional Unit at the time, Mr. Rodríguez Moreno, will be in a better position to inform the court.”

As he leaves the judge's office, de Bellis meets someone who is in an excellent position to confirm or deny Livraga's complaint. It is Miguel Ángel Giunta, the second survivor, who finally decides to speak.

Giunta's account is even more precise than Livraga's. He refers to the circumstances that led him to Horacio di Chiano's apartment, the raid, which he places at 11:15 p.m. or 11:30 p.m. on June 9. He describes, without naming him, Fernández Suárez: “a thick person, that is to say strong, with a mustache, a lot of hair, and who wore sandy pants and a short, olive green, country-style jacket; That person was carrying a 45 pistol in his hand and after warning everyone to raise their hands, he placed the muzzle of the gun on the person who testified and reiterated: 'Put your hands up, don't act stupid.' There are blows to the stomach and hip, then the transfer to the Unit, where he is questioned by an officer “who has not reached 30 years old, chubby, with curly hair, with an American mustache.” Supervising the interrogations is the deputy chief, surnamed Cuello, “a short person who walks hunched over and with his hands behind him.” Giunta also identifies Rodríguez Moreno, of the detainees he naturally remembers Don Horacio, Vicente Rodríguez, Livraga and "a person with the last name Brión or Drión." He recounts the trip to the dump, the descent into the night, the preparations for the execution:

> ...so they walked twenty or thirty meters and then the guards stayed behind and they were forced to continue in the same direction...it was then that everyone was certain that they were going to be killed...at the same time the The truck's headlights illuminated them... they realized what was going to happen and there were scenes of panic among everyone, some even kneeling and asking that they not be killed out of mercy...

He recounts the escape between the bullets, the way he was saved and how they arrested him again. Then he describes in detail the places where he was: the Munro police station, the Regional Unit and the 1st of San Martín, the cell where they locked him up, even the dog they trained on the block.

On page 42, frigate lieutenant Jorge R. Dillon, who until a short time before was intervener in the social work of the police, spontaneously appears to testify. Here is his story:

> That in the early morning of June 10, at approximately 0:45 a.m., the deponent was at his home, which is located in front of the police department, and upon hearing the shooting with which the assault on said unit began, the speaker , weapon in

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> hand, he entered the Department and from there he collaborated in its defense...; that in this way he was present in the assault to which he has referred and participated in its repression; that when the movement regarding the attack on the Headquarters had already been quelled, being after 4 in the morning, the Chief of Police arrived together with the cadets of the Vucetich school and other personnel, and those who had defended the building descended the staircase, where the meeting with the newcomers took place, exchanging impressions and stories about the events that occurred, ... on that occasion the speaker heard the Chief of Police Lieutenant Colonel Desiderio Fernández Suárez say, addressing the deponent, the deponent does not remember if Mr. Gesteira or another official, verbatim the following words: 'Transmit the order to the San Martín Regional Unit to immediately shoot that group of people that I have detained', the order being transmitted by radio.

Lieutenant Dillon then adds:

> Hours later, when the declarant was in the Headquarters Secretariat, he heard the comment that said order had been carried out, but that it had been carried out poorly, since the group of detainees had been taken to an open field and there some had managed to They fled, and the police had been forced to shoot them as they ran, not having been able to make them line up before the firing squad, as is required; According to the same comment, that had turned out to be "a carnage," and upon learning of this fact the Chief of Police showed indignation at the demonstrated inability and a few days later the then head of the unit, Rodríguez Moreno, was declared available. .

After this statement, the judge considered it appropriate to inform Fernández Suárez "of the reason why the present case is being investigated in this court, asking him at the same time to make known in a written report as much information as he deems appropriate."

Fernández Suárez, who before the Advisory Board had pronounced thirty thousand words of I apologize, now I can't find an answer phrase.

The judge: “Having not received the letter issued on pages. 26 to the Chief of Police, repeat yourself.”

Silence.

On page 51, on January 11, 1957, Moreno's new commissioner, Francisco Ferrairone, appears cited. He confirms that Livraga's arrest does not appear in the books of that police station, but that “in response to the Court's request for reports, the reiteration of the same and reports that the Police Headquarters also requested, he inquired among the department's personnel. whether the books faithfully reflected the truth, and he was able to find out that this was not the case, since he was informed that this Juan Carlos Livraga had actually been detained in that facility, or at least lodged and neither his entry nor his exit had been recorded. in the books...".

The police front begins to collapse. “This unofficial information,” Commissioner Ferrairone prudently clarifies, “was received by the witness after the answers to the request for information that he sent to the Court, and if not, he would have reported in a different way than he did.” .

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–Who was in Moreno in the month of June? –asks Dr. Hueyo.

–Commissioner Gregorio de Paula –says Ferrairone.

On page 53, the main officer Boris Vucetich, from the Moreno police station, declares. The judge He asks if he saw Livraga there:

–Yes –says the officer–. He had two gunshot wounds, one with an entry hole under the jaw and exit hole in the cheekbone, and another in the arm.

The story that Livraga told Vucetich is the same one he would tell months later: “that he was at a friend's house listening to the fight in Lausse, when they were surprised by the police dressed in civilian clothes and taken to the Regional Unit. San Martín, that after being interrogated he and other detained people were loaded into a vehicle and taken to a place that he cannot locate, there they were made to get off, they were ordered to walk, he felt gunshots, he threw himself to the ground and then lost knowledge...".

In other details, Vucetich does not seem to agree with Livraga. He says that the police doctor, Dr. Carlos Chiesa, came to see him daily. Singular doctor – in any case – this one who allows a serious gunshot wound to heal in a dungeon.

Sub-inspector Antonio Barbieri, from the Moreno police station, then declares. His testimony is a repetition of the previous one. The general idea is that Livraga was very well cared for in Moreno, with a special diet, and so many blankets to keep him warm that he could not move. The surviving shot always insisted that they had him half-naked in the dungeon and that the bandage he was wearing fell off in little pieces...

Commissioner Gregorio de Paula, on pages 55 and following, admits that Livraga was imprisoned in Moreno, who was injured, who was not entered in the books.

–Is that usual? –asks the judge.

The commissioner acknowledges that it is not usual, but that in “this exceptional case” he understood that they had already admitted him to the UR San Martín.

Was Livraga well attended? Splendidly, says the commissioner. They even gave him “foods that did not require chewing.”

Was Livraga cold? No, says the commissioner, “in his memories it appears to him wrapped with something warm, but he cannot specify what clothing it was.”

–Did they take your statement?

-No.

–Did they file a summary?

-No.

–Did someone go to visit him?

-No.

January 17. It is a dejected and gloomy man who comes to testify. He is 48 years old, he is a senior inspector, his name is Rodolfo Rodríguez Moreno. His testimony practically closes the case. Here it is:

> Asked by SS if in the month of June ppdo., he was in charge of the San Martín Regional Unit, he answers: that in fact, he was appointed to that position in February 1956 and remained in charge until approximately June 15, 1956. same year. Asked by SS if a procedure carried out by a delegation that detained Juan Carlos Livraga was under his orders as head of the Regional Unit,

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Miguel Ángel Giunta and other people, the deponent answers: that this procedure was not carried out by the speaker, but rather he remembers that a communication was received by radio from the Police Headquarters for a group of 20 men to gather at the Florida police station. would act under the orders of the Chief of Police himself, having been informed by the commissioner of the Florida section, surnamed Pena, that the command of that group was taken by the aforementioned chief along with other soldiers, among whom would be a major and a captain named San Emeterio. Asked by SS if the people who were detained in that procedure were housed as such in the San Martín Regional Unit, the declarant answers: that indeed 24 hours or perhaps a little later, he refers to day 9, in a collective car they were Approximately 12 people were transferred to the San Martín Regional Unit and then two or three more were admitted, who were detained on the street at the place of the procedure. Asked by SS if he remembers the names of those people, he answers that he cannot specify it, because he does not record it in his memory, and he answers another question: that indeed among them were Livraga, Giunta and a person with a foreign surname who later stayed in an embassy, it seems to the declarant that it was a surname similar to Carnevali. Asked by SS if the admission of these detainees was recorded in the department's books, the declarant answers that he assumes that the guard office must have done so, that in reality they were in a special situation since, according to the Florida police station , they should all remain incommunicado, at the disposal of the Chief of Police. Asked if they were interrogated by the deponent, he stated that he did not do so, that he does not believe that a formal statement was taken from them, but that he ordered the second head of the unit, Inspector Commissioner Benedicto Cuello, to interrogate them about the facts, because for information that had been provided to the declarant, such people would have been detained while they were part of a meeting linked to the subversive events that occurred that night. When asked by SS if the deponent received an order to shoot all the detainees, the deponent states: that the three people who were subsequently taken away and who were detained on the street, the speaker released on his own account for not There is merit to their being detained, remembering among them a local driver who is known to the Boulogne police station, a 56-year-old Italian night watchman who worked in a factory near the place of the procedure and does not remember the other person, and As for the rest, he actually received by police radio the final order given personally by the Chief of Police to immediately proceed to the shooting of all the people who had been detained, such order as he says was given by radio directly. from the Chief of Police in person to the speaker, in person as well. Asked by SS if he also received instructions about the place where the shooting was to be carried out, he replied: that he did not receive precise orders in that regard but only to look for an appropriate field to do it. When asked by SS the time he received the order, he stated that it was approximately 4.30 in the morning.

When asked by SS if the declarant personally directed the procedure ordered of him, he stated that in fact the police officers in charge of the execution were under his direct and personal orders. When asked by the SS how it was carried out, he stated: that the detainees were loaded into an assault car, each with its corresponding guard, and in a van that followed it, the speaker, the second chief and an officer who He believes his last name is Cáceres. That they moved to an existing vacant lot 20 blocks from Route 8, on the road that connects said route with the

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town of Boulogne, and the vehicles stopped there, the speaker descended to look for a suitable place, with the consequent difficulties due to the lack of light, and when he noticed a group of eucalyptus trees existing there, he considered that this place would be effective in intended effect, that at that moment he called 4 or 5 agents to form the platoon, and when the guard was thus weakened and the interested parties suspected for what purposes they had been taken to the place, all of them fled except for five that were left in the vehicle.
When asked by SS if Livraga and Giunta were among those five, the declarant states that it is not possible because if so they would have been rigorously shot and the declarant knows that there were five bodies left at the scene. He goes on to relate that after the escape to which he has referred, the five people in question were brought down and in pairs they were executed by firing squad,* leaving their bodies at the scene; Subsequently, the speaker asked for instructions regarding the destination that should be given to those bodies, telling him that he should send them to the nearest Polyclinic, and as it was in San Martín, the five bodies of the people in question were sent to that place. The speaker had received the maximum deadline to execute the order at the 6th hour of that morning, and approximately at that time the speaker communicated by radio to the headquarters that the execution order had been carried out without specifying whether all of the executed were or only five. how did it happen. The deponent adds that the mission entrusted to him was terribly unpleasant for the speaker, since it went beyond all the specific functions of the police, but as in case of commotion the deponent understands that the police stop depending on the leadership to be under direct orders. of the Army, he was completely sure that if he disobeyed such an order, the person who would be shot would be the witness.
When asked by SS when he informed headquarters of the incomplete way in which the order received had been carried out, the person appearing said that when he communicated at approximately 6 in the morning that the order had been carried out, his communication ignores who received it, informing him that the chief he had already retired; Later he received instructions to send the list of those shot and in response to this he sent the five names of the people who had been killed; As a result, he was called to the headquarters to give explanations and the deponent faithfully recounted the way in which the events had occurred, personally assuming responsibility for the escape of the other seven detainees, since it did not seem to him that it was appropriate to delegate that responsibility to the agents who had remained in custody of the detainees; For this reason, he was treated rigorously by the Chief of Police, and gave him the opportunity to order his immediate relief, having remained available for more than 20 days. The version contained in Livraga's complaint and Giunta's statement is then explained to the deponent in general terms, with the speaker stating that what he has declared in this hearing is the absolute truth, that it is not possible that Livraga was injured in that hearing. opportunity because what was used as a weapon was a Mauser and its projectile would have completely destroyed the man's jaw.

* At this point Rodríguez Moreno's version differs from the one I give in the text, based on the testimony of six of the seven survivors.

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Livraga; * On the other hand, he repeats again, the people who remained without escaping were five, and The deponent states that out of humanity and as is practice, he gave the order to do so and it was carried out, and that shot was fired with a 45 pistol, which is the only weapon that the police currently possess. When asked by the SS at what time the corpses were removed, the person appearing answered that upon his return from the execution, he estimated that it would be approximately 6 in the morning. The speaker communicated by radio with the headquarters and told them that the order had been carried out and he asked for instructions regarding the destination of the corpses, he was attended to by a person from the headquarters' secretariat and she let him know that the chief's order was that they should be taken to the nearest polyclinic and the person immediately ordered that The assault car returned to the site, loaded the bodies and deposited them in the San Martín polyclinic, which was the closest. Asked by SS if, after the episode referred to above, he ordered the new arrest of Juan Carlos Livraga, he answered that this was indeed the case, that he found out that the named man was in the San Martín polyclinic and when he went to look for him in that establishment It was reported that his injuries allowed him to be transferred, and the declarant arranged for him to be housed in the Moreno police station because there was no place for detainees in the Regional Unit and there was no place available in the other San Martín police stations. Asked by SS how to explain that neither of the two arrests are recorded in the books of the San Martín Regional Unit, the declarant states: that he has no explanation to give, since it is common for every entry of a detainee to be duly recorded. in the books. Asked by SS if he received an express order that in this case what the regulations provide in this regard should not be followed, the declarant says: that at no time was he given an order or instructions not to register the entry of people as detainees. in question. Asked by SS if he had any intervention in the second detention of which Giunta is said to have been subjected, and that he was transferred to the San Martín Regional Unit on the following Monday, the declarant states: that he does not remember that Giunta was detained for a second time in the Regional Unit, even though this does not mean ruling out the possibility. The photocopy* on folios is then shown to the declarant. 1, in order to state whether it is authentic, responding that since the Unit does not normally have detainees, it lacks appropriate forms to give receipt of the effects to the people who are housed as detainees, and it is possible that the photocopy shown to you be that of a form that is used for these purposes; As for the signatures that subscribe it, he does not know them, believing that the one that appears at the bottom is that of an officer named Albarello. There being no other questions to ask, the act is concluded and once this document has been read, its contents were ratified and signed in accordance after SS and before me, to which I attest.

* R. Moreno's opinion is wrong. The projectile indeed shattered Livraga's jaw, but Julio Troxler also saw him walking wounded, eight blocks from the garbage dump, at the José León Suárez level crossing, where a police officer picked him up. Di Chiano and Benavídez saw him get off at the place of the execution. Troxler points out the exact place he occupied in the assault vehicle and also saw him get out. It is implausible that Livraga, after having been saved, ran to become Balearic elsewhere, as R. Moreno seems to insinuate, and as F. Suárez has claimed.

* The receipt they gave Livraga.

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Signed by Hueyo, Rodríguez Moreno, and Secretary Paladino, pages 58 et seq. in criminal case number 3702 filed before the first instance criminal court number 8 of the city of La Plata.

This, then, is the document to which it has to respond, and will never respond, the liberating revolution.

It proves everything I stated in my “Majority” articles and in the first edition of this book: that a group of men were arrested before martial law came into effect; that they were not instructed in the process; It was not found out who they were; no sentence was passed on them; and they were massacred in an open field.

Regarding the wide gap opened in the official denial, Dr. Hueyo launches himself. It's fresh still the ink of Rodríguez Moreno's signature, when the court orders:

1st ) Summon the second head of the Mar del Plata Regional Unit, Commissioner Benedicto Cuello, to give a statement on Monday the 21st at 10 a.m.; 2°) Summon the police doctor from the Moreno police station, Dr. Chiesa, to give a statement on the same day, Monday at 9:30 a.m.; 3o ) The court will be constituted on Tuesday the 22nd in the San Martín Regional Unit in order to receive statements from the department's staff; 4th ) Next, go to the polyclinic of said city to receive statements from doctors, nurses and other personnel and proceed to examine the institution's books; 5th ) Allow non-working days and hours to continue this summary from the 22nd onwards.

The judge's haste was justified. Fernández Suárez, cornered after Rodríguez Moreno's confession and faced with the rumor (which invaded La Plata) that his preventive detention was imminent, went in search of help to the highest levels of the liberating revolution. On Monday, January 21, 1957, in the morning, accompanied by the inspector in the province, Colonel Bonnecarrere, he requested an audience with General Aramburu, and was received in the presence of General Quaranta. There he requested and obtained the complicity of the President of the Nation.

That same night, auditor Bonnecarrere called an emergency meeting, which Fernández Suárez attended. A special plane was chartered to bring the president of the Supreme Court of the province, Dr. Almílcar Mercader, from the town of Ayacucho, where he was at that time. In this framework, the execution of José León Suárez was discussed at length, the danger that the judge's clear decision to establish the truth represented for the liberating revolution, and the means that the Executive had to prevent it.

Regarding these desperate maneuvers, the following journalistic information was leaked:

Upon the return of the federal auditor Colonel Bonnecarrere from our city, after his interview held in the morning hours with the provisional president of the Nation, he... would have met around 8:30 p.m. at the Government House with his ministers and the chief of Police... The visit of the head of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Province, Dr. Amílcar A. Mercader, would have coincided at that time.
They would have been considered on both occasions... issues related to the progress of the

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Buenos Aires police department, in relation to recent events that are in the public domain.
("El Argentino" from La Plata, January 22, 1957.)

"La Razón", from Buenos Aires, in a box titled "A meeting", also echoed the proceedings, reporting that "events that occurred last year in the San Martín area" had been discussed. In these euphemisms the freedom of the press that the country enjoyed was exhausted. The public was never informed of the existence of the Livraga file.

The direction things take perhaps influences the tone with which the former deputy head of the UR San Martín, Commissioner Cuello, declares on Monday the 21st. It is a challenging testimony, at times angry. It begins with a lie that, although it is easy to verify, indicates that Fernández Suárez and his henchmen now understand what the crux of the matter is. Cuello says "that at approximately 11 p.m. on June 9, he was informed that the implementation of martial law had been broadcast on the radio."

It's false. State Radio broadcasts Bach music at 10:31 p.m.; at 10:59 p.m., by Ravel; to 11:30 p.m., by Stravinsky, and normally closes its broadcast at 12 p.m. with its characteristic march. It resumes unexpectedly at 0:11 on June 10, in chain with the official network, transmitting light music for 21 minutes, and at 0:32 o'clock it begins to promulgate the text of martial law.

Neck continues:

that at approximately 0:30 a.m. on the 10th, or rather at midnight, a group of people who were said to have been held incommunicado and at the disposal of the Chief of Police, who would have carried out the procedure for their arrest, were taken to the Regional Unit. Asked by SS if the admission of these detainees was recorded in the department's books, he stated: that this was not done because as they came incommunicado and at the disposal of the Chief of Police, it was understood that they came temporarily and in transit to be taken to the headquarters. . Asked by SS if it is not legal to register detainees as soon as they arrive at the facility, he answers: that the San Martín Regional Unit does not have facilities to house detainees, and when some arrive, it is temporarily...
Asked by SS if the detainees were interrogated, the witness states: that he does not remember well if they were interrogated, that possibly they were asked a question because the reason for their detention was not known, but he does not remember if this was recorded in writing... Asked by SS if he can give the names of the detained people, he remembers Rodríguez, he thinks he remembers a last name like Brión, or rather he believes that the last name was Lizazo, he also remembers precisely that Giunta was there; As for Juan Carlos Livraga, he does not remember... Asked by SS what happened next, he stated: that at approximately 5 in the morning his boss Rodríguez Moreno told him that through direct communication between him and the Chief of Police, Through the police radio, he had received an order from him to shoot the group that the Chief of Police had detained in Florida, and in compliance with such order, all the detainees were put on an assault vehicle, each detainee with his corresponding custody. Asked by SS if he was covered with the corresponding curtains, the witness stated that it was almost certainly like that; that said vehicle started moving followed by the Unit van led by the head of the Regional, the complainant was accompanying him and he does not remember if another officer or another person was also there; that

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They arrived at an open place that the complainant cannot locate precisely and can only say that it was in the jurisdiction of San Martín, that the assault vehicle stopped there, being illuminated by the headlights of the truck and then the shooting took place. of the detainees, and upon doing so, and rather upon establishing how many people were shot, they noticed that there were only five instead of the twelve or thirteen that were reported, and at that moment they noticed that some of the prisoners had taken to the streets. drain.

-When was that? –asks the judge.

Cuello ignores him. He attended only “as a witness and as moral support *(sic)* for the chief, who had assumed the direction of the execution.”

It seems obvious that when one is engaged in a moral task of that caliber one cannot pay attention to details. But the escape, Cuello clarifies, “was before the execution.”

JUDGE. –How many deaths were there?

NECK. -Five.

JUDGE. –Is it possible that some of those in front of the platoon were unharmed?

NECK. -I don't believe it.

JUDGE. –How were those five shot?

NECK. –I don't remember, it seems to me that it was in two groups.

Upon arriving here, the commissioner has a controversial outburst, and the judge records it on pages. 62 lap:

"At this moment the witness says that he considers it necessary to clarify that he does not see the reason for the investigation being carried out on these shootings, that these had been ordered in compliance with martial law, which he believes he remembers that it was announced as being in force the night on the 9th between 10:30 p.m. and 11 p.m., and he is almost certain that all the detainees knew about its implementation, since he even thinks he remembers that this circumstance was learned at the Regional through demonstrations by the detainees themselves.”

It is funny what this commissioner "thinks he remembers", who for other things (including what he declared half an hour earlier) is so forgetful. First he says “that at approximately 11 p.m. on June 9, he was informed that the implementation of martial law had been broadcast over the radio.” Then, the detainees arrived “at 0:30 a.m. on the 10th, or rather at midnight.” And now, those same detainees are the ones who have brought the news to the Regional, and consequently to him. But if they arrived at twelve at night, how did they manage to break the news at eleven?

Asked by the judge what they did with the bodies, Cuello says “he doesn't know if it was immediately or by later disposition, they were taken to the morgue at the San Martín polyclinic.”

Dr. Hueyo shows him Livraga's receipt and asks him if he recognizes it. Neck admits as “possible that this form was filled out at the Regional Unit.”

Do you recognize the signatures?

He does not recognize.

Do you know that Livraga was later detained in the Unit?

He doesn't know.

Do you know that Livraga was in Moreno?

He ignores it.

Do you know if the coup de grace was fired against those who were shot?

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You can't specify it.

Do you know if those executed were notified of the sentence?

Does not know.

The testimony of this police officer who, unlike Rodríguez Moreno, believes that the dead are very dead and that there is no need to go around finding out so much, is a fabric of inaccuracies and evasion.

On Tuesday, January 22, the judge moves to Florida, in search of the “third man”, Horacio di Chiano. Can't find it. He is hidden, and will only appear twenty days later, when Enriqueta Muñiz and I manage to speak with him. Dr. Hueyo interrogates Di Chiano's wife, who confirms Giunta's testimony and gives a new description of Fernández Suárez, "a large person who wore a military jacket with sand-colored gabardine pants and was a dark-skinned person. whiskers".

The judge asks her what has become of her husband. He answers “that the declarant has not seen her husband either since the night in question, she suspects that he is alive, but he has not returned home on any occasion.”

On pages 69 and following, two security guards from the Florida police station testify that they participated in the raid. Their testimonies add nothing.

From Florida, the judge went to the UR of San Martín, where he planned to establish his office. There, an urgent radio from the Police Headquarters was waiting for him, informing him that the presence of the magistrate was required in the capital of Buenos Aires. Upon arriving in La Plata, the judge conferences with the president of the provincial Supreme Court.

The terms of that interview were not revealed, but the game was in sight.
Excellently advised, Bonnecarrere and Fernández Suárez found the saving formula: for a military court to claim jurisdiction over the case.

That same day, January 22, Fernández Suárez deigned to respond for the first time to the judicial requirements. His response appears on page 71, with a stamp that says “Reserved.”

Pray like this:

In response to your letters dated December 24 and 31, 1956 and 10 and 11 of the current month of January, related to case No. 3702, entitled “Livraga, Juan Carlos - complaint”, I am pleased to address Mr. judge informing him of the following: 1st ) Juan Carlos Livraga was sentenced to the death penalty by decree 10,364 of the National EP, dated June 9, 1956, and the sentence must be carried out at the same place of the events, in the San Martín district. , according to martial law; sentence that could not be carried out with respect to the named person because he had fled moments before the execution. 2o ) The respective antecedents of that decree are found in the Archive of the Decrees Office of the Presidency of the

Nation. 3o ) Since the execution could not be carried out at the time, due to the escape of the condemned man, it was even less possible after arresting him later because martial law had been lifted.

4o ) Consequently, and having made a final ruling in the case, no other authority could subsequently intervene, since it had been tried for those facts. 5th ) Instead, and by decree

No. 11,219, he was placed at the disposal of the National EP and housed in the Olmos prison. For completeness, I let VS know that martial law is

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> It was implemented by decree-law 10,362, of June 9, 1956, and was regulated by decree 10,363, also of June 9, 1956.
> This last decree establishes, in summary, the following:
> 1°) During the validity of martial law, the provisions of Law 13,234, of general organization of the Nation in time of war, will apply. 2nd ) Any officer of the armed
> forces active and carrying out acts of service may order a summary trial with powers to apply or not apply the death penalty by firing squad to any disturber of public tranquility. 3o ) Any person who carries weapons, disobeys police orders or demonstrates suspicious attitudes of any nature is considered a disruptor.
>
> As the case would originate in an alleged irregular execution, I think it is appropriate to remember, regarding the procedure, that the application of the sides is in all cases verbal (art. 138 of the Code of Military Justice RLM 2). In any case, in the face of the journalistic scandal that, for unclear purposes, has been unleashed around the issue, it is worth emphasizing that the responsibility of the authorities or those in charge of implementing one side can only be made effective by the military courts and not by civilian magistrates (art. 136, Code of Military Justice).
>
> I greet VS very carefully.
> DA Fernández Suárez
> Lieutenant Colonel Chief of Police."

Everything was legal, then. Livraga had been shot in compliance with a decree. The small detail is that *this decree does not exist.* Or rather, it exists, but it does not affect him at all, because it is a list of soldiers sentenced to death, and *it does not include Livraga.*

The argument invoked by Fernández Suárez is a crude lie added to the previous ones.

As for the "journalistic scandal", it was an exaggeration to describe the articles that I had published in a small sheet of little circulation, and which constituted the only reference to the subject that can be found in the press of that time.

Dr. Hueyo understood that the question of jurisdiction was already raised by F. Suárez's note, but at the same time he took the opportunity to dismantle that last lie of the cornered military man. On pages 74, it has:

> For the purposes of resolving the question of jurisdiction that arises, I urge the criminal investigative judge in charge of the federal capital to request from where appropriate, as a matter of urgency, an authentic copy of decree numbers 10,362, 10,363 and 10,364, as well as the exact date and time of their validity.

The Official Gazette of June 14, 1956, with the three decrees, is incorporated into the file on pages 82. 10,362 and 10,363, implementing and regulating martial law, are dated June 9, without mention of time, and respond to the version given by Fernández Suárez. But 10,364, dated June 10, says that considering "the participation they have had in the military uprising that occurred yesterday... the death penalty by firing squad is imposed on the following individuals: Colonel (R.) Alcibiades Eduardo Cortínez, Colonel (R.) Ricardo Salomón Ibazeta..." and a list of eight more soldiers follows,

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among which, of course, the name of Livraga or that of his fellow executioners does not appear.

Consequently, the court resolves, on January 28:

> Add to the summary copy No. 18,171 of the Official Gazette, published on June 14, and it appears that it does not conform to the reality that by decree No. 10,364 the National Executive Power has ordered the execution of Juan Carlos Livraga, as The Chief of Police states this in his note dated the 22nd; Let the aforementioned official know of this circumstance, requesting that if such a decree exists, he informs the exact number...
> ...Reiterate the exhortations of pages. 74, and with respect to the latter, let it be known that the authentic text of the decrees is not of interest, but rather, and as a matter of utmost urgency, the precise date and time of their promulgation and publication.

From Dr. Hueyo to Fernández Suárez, pages 83:

> I am pleased to address the complaint made by Juan Carlos Livraga to you, letting you know that in your note of the 22nd of this month it is stated “that Juan Carlos Livraga was sentenced to the death penalty by decree number 10,364 of the National Executive Branch dated June 9, 1956”, and the undersigned noting that in the aforementioned decree-law, published in the Official Gazette No. 18,171, of last June 14, the name of the complainant Livraga does not appear; It has been decided to address this to VS to warn you of the erroneous information, and to request that if such a decree exists, you please make its exact number known.

Fernández Suárez does not respond. But on January 30, he sent a copy of the note that he had just sent to the Minister of the Army, General Ossorio Arana, with the aim, he says, that "military justice would understand the case being investigated, as it falls under its exclusive jurisdiction." . The note to Ossorio Arana reviews the background of the case (without mentioning decree number 10,364) and requests:

> a) that the military justice understands the case being investigated; b) that, consequently, the pertinent question of inhibitory jurisdiction is raised (Art. 150, paragraph 1 ). , of the Code of Military Justice RLM 2).

The same day the military judge, Lieutenant Colonel Abraham González, claimed the case in these terms:

> I have the pleasure of addressing to Your Excellency, in the summary that I am instructing of a higher order, related to alleged infractions in the application of martial law ordered by the superior decrees numbers 10,362 and 10,363, in order to request that you kindly inform this court of military instruction No. 27 ... if before that court under its jurisdiction ... a case is processed due to a complaint or complaint formulated by Mr. Juan Carlos Livraga, linked to the same fact that the undersigned is investigating. If so, and since it is a fact that falls within military jurisdiction by “ratione materiae” as it could equally be by “ratione personae” in the case of active military personnel who had acted in compliance with the provisions of article 2 of the aforementioned superior

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> Decree No. 10,363, given that in such case article 108, paragraph 1 would be strictly applicable. , of the Code of Military Justice... I now raise before You the question of jurisdiction by declination determined by articles 150 (subsection 1 ) and 151 of the aforementioned legal body.
> Consequently, I request that VS refrain from continuing to hear the aforementioned case by referring the proceedings to this military investigation court, or, in the event that the proposed declination is not accepted, the proceedings be elevated to the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation to definitively resolve the issue raised.

On February 1 , 1957, the La Plata magistrate resolved to maintain his jurisdiction, stating that, “ratione personae”, it is premature to give rise to the injunction, because in the state of the case there is no person directly accused and the fact, Until then, it does not affect “active military personnel”; and that, “ratione materiae”, there are not sufficient elements to grant it either. He adds that, when a similar question was raised by the Chief of Police, he showed his willingness to resolve his jurisdiction,

> despite the fact that whoever formulated the question was not a party, and for this purpose he ordered, on January 23, to issue an appeal to the criminal investigating judge on duty in the federal capital to request, where appropriate, , authentic copy of decree numbers 10,362 and 10,363, as well as the exact date and time of their validity. This exhortation was reiterated on the 28th, without obtaining a response.

Dr. Hueyo has understood from the outset that this is the crucial point of his investigation: the time in which the law was promulgated. He did not have time to obtain the proof, which months later, I would achieve by photocopying and publishing the book of Radio del Estado announcers. But the following analysis seems irrefutable to me:

> The purpose of the information requested – it says – was to determine whether the arrest of the complainant, which occurred between 11:15 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on June 9, took place after or before the martial law came into effect.
> In the first case, the investigation and repression of the fact consists of having committed a violation of the application of said martial law, or of pertinent norms of the code of military justice, it is a matter that does not concern the civil authorities and, with the required information, the undersigned would have declared so.
> But in the second case, that is, that the detention of these people had been prior to the validity of martial law, even if their execution was ordered after it, that law could not reach said people, since No criminal law has retroactive effect, and the interested parties, whatever their connection with the subversive movement, when detained had no opportunity to desist from their attitude and lay down their weapons.
>
> In this hypothesis, the detention in question, the subsequent shooting of some of those people, the attempted shooting of others and the new detention of the complainant until he is placed at the disposal of the National Executive Branch, are facts that are not included in the law. military or its interpretation, but, if duly verified, they would fall within the figures of the penal code, the application of which is the responsibility of the undersigned. For such

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grounds, resolves to inform the applicant that the undersigned maintains its jurisdiction.

# 35. BLIND JUSTICE

The case went to the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, which on April 24, 1957 issued one of the most opprobrious rulings in our judicial history, with the signature of all its members: doctors Alfredo Orgaz, Manuel J. Argañarás, Enrique V. Galli, Carlos Herrera, Benjamín Villegas Basavilbaso, following the opinion of the Attorney General of the Nation, Dr. Sebastián Soler.

This ruling, by transferring the case to a so-called military justice system, equally complicit and factious, He left the massacre of José León Suárez unpunished forever.

Half a face is enough for Dr. Soler to rule on the episodes that I have recounted in this book. Here is his opinion:

According to the statements of the complainant, the incident being investigated in the proceedings would have been carried out by police personnel from the province of Buenos Aires. Now, from the report on pages. 24 it is clear that at the time of the events of June 9, 1956, the police forces acted "subordinated to the provisions and authorities of a military nature."

Consequently, attentive to what is provided in art. 108, inc. 2nd and 3rd , and art. 109, inc. 6th , of the Code of Military Justice, I believe that the jurisdiction of military justice should be declared to hear the sub-judice, also highlighting that this conclusion is reinforced by art. 136 of the same legal text in that it provides that "the responsibility of the military authorities for the parties that promulgate, or those in charge of its application, when they have exceeded their functions, can only be made effective by military courts."

Note: the opinion does not even mention the fundamental dilemma raised by Dr. Hueyo. It goes over all the serious aspects of the problem as if on tenterhooks. It is based on the childish vagueness that the police were subordinate to the Army during the "events of June 9, 1956," which *is false,* because throughout June 9, and since during that day no decree that modified their situation, the police were not legally subordinated to the Army, but to the Ministry of Government of the Province. But it also *has nothing to do with it,* even if it is false, because Livraga's complaint, which is the one presented to him, refers to a crime committed on June 10, which is the same as saying a day later, a year then, a century later. Or does a famous jurist come to believe himself to be an angel, or a Wells character, to play with time like this? In half a face, Dr. Soler swallows everything that he has taught for decades in his lectures and in his texts.

The Court's ruling says:

Cars and seen; considering: That the events that give rise to this case are attributed to

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> officials and employees of the police of the province of Buenos Aires, who acted in the emergency with subordination to the provisions and authorities of a military nature, as reported to fs. 24 at the request of this Court. It also emerges from the background that the aforementioned events occurred due to the revolutionary movement that was stifled on that occasion, that is, in exceptional circumstances in which the maintenance of internal order constituted a specific military function, according to doctrine established on the date on which cause “Todesco, Hernando”.
>
> That under such conditions and in accordance with the provisions of article 136 of the Code of Military Justice, and the ruling of the Attorney General, it is appropriate to declare the jurisdiction of the military investigative judge in the case. For this reason and what has been ruled by the Attorney General, it is declared that it is up to the military investigative judge to hear the process, to whom the records will be sent.

I said in the first edition of this book – without anyone thinking of suing me for contempt – that the attorney's opinion and the Court's ruling were a sinister corruption of the legal norm. I want to summarize, in the simplest form, the reasons for that “dictum” that I, for my part, believed I was authorized to pronounce.

An individual, Livraga, is arrested on a day when ordinary laws are in force. He is not formally accused of anything, but there is still no crime in that arrest. It is true that they hit him a few times; let's forget them.

The person who arrests him is a civil official, the Chief of Police of the Province. It is true that this official is *also* a lieutenant colonel; but, for that matter, it is as if it were not; It is not as a lieutenant colonel who detains him, but as a civil official, dependent on the Ministry of Government of that province.

While in detention, Livraga naturally does not commit any crime. That day ends – like everyone – at twelve at night. *The next day* (it doesn't matter that only 32 minutes have passed, it is already the next day, June 10), a law is promulgated, which is martial law. That law comes into force on June 10. Livraga, imprisoned since the day before, cannot rape her. It is as if that law did not exist for Livraga, nor did Livraga exist for that law; They are spheres that do not touch; Anything that is done to him in the name of that law, any penalty that is inflicted on him, will be a crime. Livraga is located in the criminal area prior to that law; He cannot be tried or punished except in accordance with the penal code in force at the time of his arrest, which provides for guarantees, defense, a natural judge, and a process.

Now a man comes. He is the same man as before, the civil official, the Chief of Police, who has undergone a *Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde-type transformation,* and arrives converted into a military authority, for which his rank of lieutenant colonel – which was previously indifferent – now it's useful. This man cannot ignore that he, a civilian, has detained Livraga, a civilian, and that their relations are absolutely frozen on that level; that he has *detained* Livraga in civil time, governed by the code, and can only deal with him on that plane; and that any transgression that he commits to that obvious norm will have to be judged on that same level, which is inalienable, that is, it will have to be judged by a civil judge. Because that time of civil relations between authority and mere citizens does not extinguish when a subversion occurs; at most, it underlies it; The two times overlap, but cannot be mixed. This civil official cannot act, as a military authority, over someone whom he has *detained* as a civil official. However, act. He orders him killed. But it is

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It is evident that when he acts, when he orders Livraga to be killed, he continues to act as a civil official, even if he believes otherwise, because that is his only possible form of relationship with that detainee. If in that relationship he commits a crime, he must necessarily be tried as a civil servant. It's not an execution he orders, it's a murder.

Let us suppose, to see more clearly, that in this interregnum of metamorphosis caused by subversion, this official turned military authority takes advantage of the situation to commit any crime, rob a bank, murder a creditor. Will he later be tried by military justice? It seems obvious to me that not. His dual character as a civil official and military authority does not prevent him from committing a crime, governed by the penal code, which must be judged by that same code.

Now let's assume the opposite. Suppose that the mere promulgation of martial law gives a police chief, over all people *previously detained* in police stations, etc., the same unlimited authority that Fernández Suárez exercised over Livraga. This man, then, can murder all the prisoners entrusted to his custody, and then – if the question arises – be "tried" by a military court, that is, by his colleagues and comrades, embarked on the same faction and perhaps guilty of similar feats.

Hasn't that happened? Did Lieutenant Colonel Abraham González, a military judge, sanction to Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez, or did he even divulge any results of that "trial"?

I want to be told what difference there is between this conception of justice and the one that produced the gas chambers in Nazism.

Now let's go back to Livraga. When this man, imprisoned, boards a bus, at 11:30 p.m. on June 9, he is, despite everything, protected by article 18 of the Constitution, which says that "No inhabitant of the Nation can be punished without a prior trial." founded on law prior to the fact of the case... or taken from the judges designated by law before the fact of the case."

What does Livraga do to lose these rights?

Nothing.

And yet, he loses them, and this is another of the phases of the legal monstrosity validated by the Court's ruling and by the military "trial", which are stones on the same path because in 1957 it was not necessary to be a genius to knowing that Lieutenant Colonel González was not going to find Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez guilty.

That, then, is the indelible stain, which stains a government, a justice system and an army alike: That the Florida

detainees were punished, and with death, and without trial, and were taken from the judges appointed by law before the fact of the cause, and by virtue of a law subsequent to the fact of the cause, and even without fact and without cause.

There will no longer be any juggling act capable of erasing the terrible evidence that the government of the liberating revolution retroactively applied, to men detained on June 9, a martial law promulgated on June 10.

And that is not an execution.

It's a murder.

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# 36. EPILOGUE

One of my concerns, in discovering and recounting this massacre when its executors were still in power, was to keep it separate, as much as possible, from the other executions whose victims were mostly military men. Here was an episode to which the Liberating Revolution could not respond even with sophistry.

This method forced me to renounce the historical framework, in favor of the private argument. It was about presenting the Liberating Revolution, and its heirs to this day, with the ultimate case of an unjustified atrocity, and asking them if they recognized it as theirs, or if they expressly disavowed it. Disavowal could not take other forms than the punishment of the guilty and the moral and material reparation of the victims. Three editions of this book, around forty published articles, a project presented to Congress and countless minor alternatives have served for twelve years to pose that question to five successive governments. The response was always silence. The class that these governments represent sympathizes with that murder, accepts it as their work and does not punish it simply because it is not willing to punish itself.

The executions of soldiers in the barracks were, of course, so barbaric, illegal and arbitrary like those of civilians in the garbage dump.

The six men who, under the command of Colonel Yrigoyen, tried to install the Valle command in Avellaneda and who were captured without resistance, were shot in the Lanús Regional Unit in the early hours of June 10.

Colonel Cogorno, leader of the uprising in La Plata, is executed in the first minutes of the 11th in the barracks of the 7th regiment. The civilian Alberto Abadíe, wounded in the fray, is previously *treated.* Only at dusk on the 12th is it ripe for the platoon, which faces it in the Forest.

On June 10 at noon, Colonels Cortínez and Ibazeta and five junior officers are tried in Campo de Mayo. The court presided over by General Lorio decides that the death penalty is not appropriate. The Executive Branch jumps wildly over the “res judicata” and issues decree 10,364 that sentences six of the seven accused to death. The order is carried out at 3:40 in the morning on June 11, next to an embankment.

At the same time, the four non-commissioned officers who had momentarily taken it were shot at the Army Mechanics School, and at the National Penitentiary three non-commissioned officers from the Palermo Regiment 2, who were allegedly “complicated.” Some time later I spoke with the widow of one of them, the musician sergeant Luciano Isaías Rojas. She confided in me that night of the uprising her husband had slept with her at home.

On June 12, General Valle surrendered, in exchange for the killing to stop. They shoot him that same night.

There are 27 executions in less than 72 hours in six places.

All of them are qualified by article 18 of the National Constitution, in force at that time. moment, which says: “The death penalty for political reasons is forever abolished.”

In some cases martial law is applied retroactively. In others, res judicata is abused. In others, the desistance of the armed action that the accused made upon the first summons is not taken into account. In short, it is a

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vast, arbitrary and illegal murder, whose main perpetrators are the signatories of the decrees that sought to validate them: generals Aramburu and Ossorio Arana, admirals Rojas and Hartung, brigadier Krause.

## 37. ARAMBURU AND THE HISTORICAL JUDGMENT

On May 29, 1970, a Montonero commando kidnapped Lieutenant General Aramburu from his home. Two days later that organization sentenced him to death and listed the charges that the Peronist people leveled against him. The first two included “the killing of 27 Argentines without prior trial or just cause” on June 9, 1956.

The command was named after the executed General Valle. Aramburu was executed at 7 in the morning on June 1 and his body appeared 45 days later in the south of the province of Buenos Aires.

The episode shook the country in different ways. The people did not mourn the death of Aramburu. The Army, the institutions, the oligarchy raised an indignant cry. Among the hundreds of protests and statements there is one that deserves to be remembered. He describes the act as a “monstrous and cowardly crime, unprecedented in the history of the Republic.” One of its signatories is General Bonnecarrere, governor of the province when Operation Massacre broke out. Another is General Leguizamón Martínez, who had executed Colonel Cogorno in the La Plata barracks. A third is Colonel Fernández Suárez himself. They did not seem the best placed to talk about precedents.

The execution of Aramburu caused a week later the fall of General Onganía, whose dictatorship had already been broken on another May 29 - the previous year - by the popular epic of Cordobazo, and momentarily postponed the projects of the liberal sectors that they saw in the executed general a replacement solution for the failed Argentine Revolution.

The drama of that death accelerated a process that usually takes years: the creation of a hero. In a matter of months, liberal doctors, the press, and political heirs canonized Aramburu through the unrestricted use of dithyramb and elegy. Paladin of democracy, soldier of freedom, beloved son of the country, soldier forged in the classic mold of the San Martin tradition, simple and upright ruler who by temperament shied away from excesses of authority, are some of the spells that evade history. Aramburu's true profile. Two years later he had his Mausoleum, decorated with Virtues.

Not all Aramburu supporters were foolish enough to consume that image forged in that jargon. Some, who more intelligently recognized the causes of popular hatred, maintained that “the Aramburu of 1970 was not that of 1956” and that placed in the same circumstances he would not have been shot, persecuted or banned. Like Lavalle, Dorrego's murderer, he would have committed the terrible acts he committed under the influence of underhanded advisors: it was enough to change the name of Salvador del Carril to Américo Ghioldi. Both would have repented, consummating in the final moment an enigmatic approach to their land and their people. Within that perspective it is possible that Aramburu, in addition to the gorilla monument, may deserve the expiatory cantata of a future Sabato.

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For a less subjective judgment, this metamorphosis is unimportant even if it were true. Executor of a class policy whose foundation – exploitation – is in itself anti-human and whose episodes of cruelty come from that foundation like the branches of the trunk, the perplexities of Aramburu, now far from power, barely illuminate the gap between ideals. abstract and the concrete acts of the members of that class: the evil he did was the deeds and the good he thought, a late shudder of bourgeois conscience. Aramburu was forced to shoot and proscribe in the same way that his successors until today were forced to torture and murder for the simple fact that they represent a usurping minority that only manages to stay in power through deception and violence.

The June massacre exemplifies but does not exhaust the perversity of that regime. The Aramburu government imprisoned thousands of workers, repressed every strike, and devastated the union organization. Torture became widespread and spread throughout the country. The decree that prohibits the naming of Perón or the clandestine operation that snatches his wife's corpse, mutilates it and takes it out of the country, are expressions of a hatred that does not escape even the inanimate objects, sheets and cutlery of the Foundation that have been incinerated and melted. because they are stamped with that name that is conceived as demonic. An entire social work is destroyed, popular pools that evoke the “cursed fact” are mowed down, liberal humanism retreats to medieval backgrounds: such hatred has rarely been seen here, rarely have two social classes confronted each other so clearly.

But if this type of violence reveals the true Argentine society, fatally divided, another less spectacular and more pernicious violence is installed in the country with Aramburu. His government models the infamous second decade, the Alsogarays, the Kriegers, the Verriers appear and neatly tie the ties of dependency unleashed during Perón's government. The Argentine Republic, one of the countries with the lowest foreign investment (5% of the total invested), which barely remitted abroad one dollar per inhabitant annually, begins to manage those loans that only benefit the lender, to acquire colored labels with the name of technologies, to establish foreign capital formed with national savings and to accumulate that debt that today taxes 25% of our exports. A single decree, 13,125, strips the country of 2 billion dollars in nationalized bank deposits and makes them available to international banks that will now be able to control credit, strangle small industry and prepare the massive entry of large monopolies. .

Fifteen years later it will be possible to take stock of this policy: a dependent and stagnant country, a submerged working class, a rebellion that explodes everywhere. That rebellion finally reaches Aramburu, confronts him with his actions, paralyzes the hand that signed loans, bans and executions.

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# APPENDICES

## OPERATION IN CINEMA

In 1971 Jorge Cedrón decided to film “Operation Massacre”. The filming was carried out under the clandestine conditions that the Lanusse dictatorship imposed on most political activities and some artistic activities. Around thirty professional actors, mostly top-notch, accepted the risk of filming.

The film was completed in August 1972. With the help of Juventud Peronista, grassroots Peronism, union and student groups, it was shown hundreds of times in neighborhoods and towns in the Capital and interior, without a single copy falling into the hands of the police. .
It is estimated that more than one hundred thousand colleagues had seen it before May 25, 1973. From that date, permission from the Film Institute to legally exhibit it is awaited.

In the film Julio Troxler plays his lengthy role. When discussing the book with him and Cedrón, we came to the conclusion that the film should not be limited to the events narrated there.
A militancy of almost 20 years authorized Troxler to summarize the collective experience of Peronism in the hard years of resistance, proscription and armed struggle.

The film therefore has a text that does not appear in the original book. I include it in this edition because I understand that it completes the book and gives it its ultimate meaning.

### *FINAL SEQUENCE*

José León Suárez.
Sunrise.

TROXLER'S voice (off). - I returned from Bolivia, they put me in prison, I learned about the electric prod. Mentally I returned to this place many times. I wanted to find the answer to that question: what it meant to be a Peronist.

Corpses in the garbage dump.

What did this hatred mean, why did they kill us like this. We took a long time in understanding it, in realizing that Peronism was something more permanent than a government that can be defeated, than a party that can be banned.

Moving masses.

Peronism was a class, it was the working class that cannot be destroyed, the axis of a liberation movement that cannot be

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Corpses
in Plaza de Mayo.

Martyrs of the people:
Jáuregui.

Baldu.
Master.
Abal Medina.

boy with flag
leads a demonstration.

Busy factory.

Frondizi.

Misery village.
Signs: Esso, Fiat, etc.
Fallen protester.

Politicians.

Cordobazo documentary
begins.

Soldiers.

Military trucks.

Painted on a wall: "FAP,
FAR, Montoneros."

Documentary resume
of Cordobazo.

The people reject

defeated, and the hatred they had for us
was the hatred of the exploiters for the
exploited.

Many more were going to fall victims
of that hatred, in popular demonstrations,
under torture,
kidnapped and murdered by the police and
the army, or in combat.

But the people never stopped raising the
flag of liberation, the working class never
stopped rebelling against injustice.

Peronism tried all methods to regain
power, from the electoral pact to the military
coup. The result was always the same:
exploitation delivers repression.

That's how we learned.

From politicians we could
only expect deception,

the only definitive revolution is
the one made by the people and directed
by the workers.
The military can join it as individuals,
but not direct it as an institution.

Because that institution belongs to the enemy,
and against that enemy it is only possible
to oppose another army,
arising from the
people.

These truths were learned with
blood,
but for the first time they made the
executioners retreat,

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to the cavalry.
Córdoba wrapped in smoke,
Lanusse.

Street fighting: Rosario.
Street fighting: Mendoza.
Commissioner Sandoval,
dead.
Diary title: "They kill
to General Sánchez".
Aramburu.

Aramburu burial.
Lizaso's execution.
Graffiti: "Descamisados.
Commando Carlos Lizaso".

Troxler holds his rifles
of two guards in José
León Suárez.

Documentary: masses in action.

Vandor.
Alonzo.
Crowd.
Crowd advances.
Crowd advances.
Crowd advances.

for the first time they made the enemy
tremble, who
began to seek impossible agreements

between oppressors and oppressed.
The tide was beginning to turn, the bullets
were also entering them.
them, the torturers, the heads
of repression.

Those who had signed death sentences

They suffered the death penalty.
The names of our dead
They revived in our combatants.

What we had improvised in our desperation,
others learned to organize rigorously, to
articulate it with the needs

of the working class, which in silence and
anonymity is forging its independent
organization of traitors
and bureaucrats, the long war of
the people, the
long road, the long march
towards the
Socialist Homeland.

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# PROLOGUE FOR THE BOOK EDITION

## *(from the first edition, July 1957)*

*Operación Masacre* was published in the magazine “Majoría”, from May 27 to May 29. July 1957: a total of nine notes.

The events that I relate had already been discussed by me in the newspaper “Revolución Nacional”, in half a dozen articles published between January 15 and the end of March 1957.

Now the book is published by Ediciones Sigla.

These names could indicate, in me, an exclusive preference for the fierce nationalist press. There's no such thing. I wrote this book to be published, to *act,* not to be incorporated into the vast number of ideologues' daydreams. I investigated and related these tremendous facts to make them known in the widest possible way, so that they inspire fear, so that they can never be repeated again. Whoever helps me spread and disseminate them is for me an ally whom I do not question about their political ideas.

In this way I respond to the timid and poor in spirit who ask me why I – I consider myself a left-wing man – I collaborate journalistically with right-wing men and publications. I answer: because they dare, and at this moment I do not recognize or accept a higher hierarchy than that of civil courage. Or will they expect me to silence these things because of ridiculous partisan prejudices? While ideologues dream, more practical people torture and kill. And that is concrete, that is urgent, that is here and now.

I can, if necessary, renounce or postpone political schemes whose truth is ultimately conjectural. I cannot, nor do I want to, nor should I renounce a basic feeling: indignation at the abuse, cowardice and murder.

I have also learned that partisan distances are perhaps the most superficial that separate men. There are other differences that matter: the insurmountable, irreducible differences of character. In people who think the same as I do about most abstract problems, I have found an alarming pragmatism in the face of concrete situations that require almost instinctive reactions, capable of justifying the human condition.

The torturer who, at the slightest provocation, becomes a shooter is a current problem, a clear target to be annihilated by civil conscience. Until now we were unaware that we had that beast crouching among us. Even in Nazi Germany, it took years of misery, fear and bombing to bring it to light. In the Argentine Republic, six hours of mutiny were enough for it to appear its repugnant silhouette. Here it is, with its circumstantial name, for all to see. And act accordingly.

The rest, at this precise moment, does not interest me.

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# INTRODUCTION

## *(from the first edition, March 1957)*

The first news about the massacre of José León Suárez reached my ears in the form more coincidentally, on December 18, 1956. It was an imprecise version, typical of the place—a ca-faith – that I heard it formulated. It emerged that a man allegedly shot during the riot Peronist of June 9 and 10 of that year survived and was not in jail.

The story seemed cinematic to me, suitable for all exercises of disbelief. (It made the same impression on many, and that was a misfortune. An officer of the armed forces, for example, to whom I related the events before publishing them, described them in all good faith as a “serial novel.”)

This, however, may be just the mask of wisdom. The absolute disbeliever is usually as naive as the one who believes everything; They basically belong to the same psychological category.

I asked for more information. And the next day I met the first important actor in the drama: Dr. Jorge Doglia. The interview with him greatly impressed me. It is possible that Doglia, a 32-year-old lawyer, had his nerves destroyed by a relentless fight waged for several months, from his position as Head of the Judicial Division of the Provincial Police, against the police "methods" of which he was witness. But his sincerity seemed absolute to me. He told me terrifying cases of torture with cattle prods and lit cigarettes, of whipping with rubber bands and wires, of common criminals – generally “linyeras” and pickpockets without relatives who could claim for them – killed with clubs in the different police stations of the province. And all this under the regime of a liberating revolution that many Argentines received with hope because they believed that it would end the abuses of police repression.

Doglia had fought valiantly against all this, but now he was overcome by discouragement. Two months earlier he had denounced the torture and illegal shootings before an Information Service. But there a bureaucrat who could well spend the rest of his days studying in elementary texts the rules for cultivating the informant – a principle that we assume is basic to any similar Service – found nothing better than to expose him. Instead of protecting him, they put his life in danger, subject since then to the most direct threats.

A similar complaint presented by Doglia to the province's Ministry of Government ended in an accumulation of scholarly paper, a file where – with prose worthy of Gracián, in his bad moments – a gentleman undersecretary came to the conclusion that there was something, but it was not known what. At this time the file will continue to grow, accumulating pages, dust and declamatory phrases. But in short, nothing. In short, slowness and ineptitude, when it is evident that this was an issue that needed to be resolved quickly and well. This is the service that some officials provide to the current government.

Doglia did not place excessive trust in journalism. He assumed that the official newspapers were not going to deal with such a thorny issue, and on the other hand he did not want the opposition bodies to exploit it for political reasons. I didn't expect too much either.

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of Justice, before which the surviving shot had just appeared as a plaintiff. Doglia predicted from the first moment: 1) that the case would be claimed by a Military Court, and 2) that this claim would be attended to. (The first was fulfilled punctually at the beginning of February 1957. The second remained to be seen. Everything depended on what was resolved by the Supreme Court of the Nation, before which the jurisdictional conflict was raised. When this book was published, also the Doglia's second prediction has come true.)

As for the surviving shot, I got the first concrete information that night: his name was Juan Carlos Livraga. On the morning of December 20, I had in my hands the photocopy of the lawsuit filed by Livraga. Later I was able to verify that the account of events given there was essentially accurate, although with some serious omissions and inaccuracies of detail. But it was still too cinematic. It looked like it was ripped straight from a movie.

And yet, that demand was already a *fact.* What was alleged there could be entirely false or not, but it was a fact: a man who claimed to have been shot irregularly and illegally appeared before a criminal judge to denounce “whoever is responsible” for attempted homicide and damage. .

There was something else. The letter mentioned a second survivor, a certain Giunta, which provided an immediate possibility of verifying the reported facts. We were already a long way from that initial rumor picked up in a cafe thirty-six hours earlier.

That same afternoon the copy of the complaint was in the hands of Mr. Leónidas Barletta, director of “Propósitos”. Barletta said little and promised nothing. He only asked if the dissemination of that text could not harm the progress of the judicial investigation. It was answered that the most urgent thing was to protect the lives of the plaintiff, Doglia himself and other witnesses, who were considered in danger, through adequate publicity. Three days later, on the night of December 23, the complaint was on the street, filed by “Purposes.” On the 21st, meanwhile, I had my first direct contact with Livraga in the study of his lawyer, Dr. von Kotsch. I spoke at length with him, collecting the data that I would later use in the report published by “Revolución Nacional.”

The first thing that caught my attention in Livraga were, naturally, the two bullet scars (entry and exit holes) on his face. This was also a *fact.* The circumstances under which he received those wounds could be discussed, but the evidence that he had received them could not be discussed, although an official version went so far as to state, absurdly, that “no shots of any kind were fired at him.”

On the other hand, a fundamental question was immediately raised, that of Livraga's innocence or guilt in the June 9 mutiny. If he had been guilty, even in intention, was it normal, psychologically, for him to appear before the judges to demand reparation? Wasn't it much more logical for him to remain calm, thanking God for having saved his life and regained his freedom? I believe that a man has to feel *innocent* to file a complaint like this against an entire Power such as the provincial police. Of course – it will be said – everything is possible in abnormal psychology. But if there is something that stands out about Livraga, it is her normality, her reserve, her reasoning and observational capacity.

On the other hand, I have already said, he was free. This was also a *fact.* How can we admit that a direct actor in the June episodes, a “revolutionary”, someone who was shot, was free? The only thing that could explain it was the hypothesis of his innocence. And that's it

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We were further and further away from the “serialized novel”, which from then on would be the exclusive responsibility of the official versions.

I will not relate here how the skein was unraveled; how an almost definitive overview of the events was established from the initial thread; Starting from one character in the drama, locate almost all the others. I prefer to present the results obtained.

In the four months that this search has already lasted, I have spoken with the three survivors of the drama who are still free in the country. I was the first to reach all of them as a journalist. I was able to locate and interview the third party even before the acting justice.

I have discovered the names of three more survivors who are in Bolivia and that of a seventh who is imprisoned in Olmos. I have established and proven that a man who appeared as dead on the official list of those shot (Reinaldo Benavídez), and for whom there would even be a death certificate, is perfectly safe. Conversely, I regretted seeing that another man (Mario Brión), who did not appear on that list and whom I briefly hoped to find alive, fell before the platoon.

I have spoken with eyewitnesses of each of the stages of the procedure that culminated in the massacre. Some material evidence is in my hands, before reaching its natural recipient. I have obtained the stenographic version of the secret sessions of the Provincial Consultative Council where the matter was debated. I have spoken with relatives of the victims, I have established direct or indirect relationships with conspirators, asylum seekers and fugitives, alleged informers and anonymous heroes. And I am sure that I have always taken the maximum precautions to protect my informants, as far as is compatible with journalistic obligation. In all these efforts I had the invaluable help of the person to whom this book is dedicated.

I certainly don't claim to have gotten everywhere first. I know that there was a judicial investigation, and although I do not know directly its conclusions, I have every reason to assume that it was very serious, efficient and rapid until it was interrupted by the jurisdictional conflict. I hope that when their results are made public – if they ever happen – they can fill the inevitable gaps in this story.

Part of the material collected here appeared in the weekly “Revolución Nacional” directed by Dr. Cerruti Costa. I hope that Dr. Cerruti will not blame me for ingratitude if I say that the fact that I brought him that material does not imply a preference or sympathy for the political line on which he is placed. As a journalist, I'm not too interested in politics. For me it was a forced choice, although I do not regret it. The initial report on Juan Carlos Livraga had already been rejected by the different weeklies I visited, when Dr. Cerruti had the courage to publish it and begin with it the series of articles and reports on the executions.

Suspicions that I foresee force me to declare that I am not a Peronist, I have not been one nor do I intend to be one. If it were, I would say so. I don't think this would compromise my comfort or my personal peace of mind any more than this publication.

I am also no longer a supporter of the revolution that – like so many – I believed to be liberating.

I know perfectly well, however, that under Peronism I would not have been able to publish a book like this, nor the journalistic articles that preceded it, nor even attempt to investigate police crimes that also existed then. We have gained that.

Most journalists and writers have come, in the last decade, to consider the

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Peronism as a personal enemy. And with plenty of reason. But we should have warned something: you cannot defeat an enemy without first understanding it.

In recent months I have had to come into contact for the first time with those fearsome beings – the Peronists – who worry the newspaper headlines. And I have come to the conclusion (so trivial that I am surprised not to see it shared) that, however mistaken they may be, they are human beings and should be treated as such. Above all, they should not be given reasons to persist in error. Executions, torture and persecutions are such strong motives that at a certain moment they can turn error into truth.

More than anything I fear the moment when, humiliated and offended, they begin to be right. Doctrinal reason, in addition to the sentimental or human reason that already assists them, and that ultimately is the basis of it. And that moment is close and will arrive fatally, if we insist on the misguided policy of revenge that has been directed above all against the working class sectors. The repression of Peronism, as it has been faced, does nothing more than justify it a posteriori. And this is not only unfortunate: it is idiotic.

I reiterate that this work does not pursue a political objective, much less does it intend to stoke completely sterile hatred. It pursues – one among many – a social objective: the short or long-term annihilation of unpunished murderers, torturers, prod “technicians” who remain despite changes in government, the armed underworld and uniformed

If you ask me why I speak now, having remained silent as a journalist when others did not – although I have never written a single signed or anonymous word in praise of Peronism, nor on the other hand have I encountered a case of atrocity comparable to this –, I will say with all honesty: I have learned my lesson. But now it is my teachers who are silent.
For several months I have witnessed the voluntary silence of the entire “serious press” regarding this execrable massacre, and I have felt ashamed.

It will also be said that the execution of José León Suárez was an isolated episode, of rather anecdotal importance. I believe the opposite. It was the perfect culmination of a system. It was one case among others; the most obvious, not the wildest. I have known things that are difficult to keep silent about, but that at this moment it would be unbearable to say them. Excessive truth can drive people crazy and annihilate the moral conscience of a people. Someday the tragic story of the June massacres will be written in full. Then you will see how amazement surpasses our borders.

Meanwhile, the police chief who ordered this particular massacre remains in office.

That means the fight against what he represents continues. And I have the firm conviction that the ultimate result of that struggle will influence the nature of our repressive systems for years; It will decide whether we are to live as civilized people or as Hottentots.

I know that the Chief of Police of the province of Buenos Aires has shown great curiosity – which I suppose has been unsatisfied until now – to know who was the author of the articles in which he was presumably attacked. In reality, I must say that there has been no intention to attack his person, except to the extent that he constitutes one of the two faces of Civilization and Barbarism studied a century ago by a great Argentine; and precisely the one that must disappear, that we must all fight for to disappear.

With the publication of this signed book, the Police Chief's doubts will be dispelled.

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In such a revelation there is no foolish spirit of bravado or defiance. I know perfectly well that in this country a police chief is powerful, while a journalist – obscure in addition – is barely anything. But it happens that I believe, with all naivety and firmness, in the right of any citizen to divulge the truth he knows, no matter how dangerous it may be. And I believe in this book, in its effects.

I hope that I will not be criticized for believing in a book – even if it is written by me – when they are so many more who believe in machine guns.

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# REQUIRED APPENDIX

## *(from the first edition, March 1957)*

## LIE AS A PROFESSION

With the note published in “Majority” on July 15, 1957, I put a provisional epilogue to my book. “Provisional” was no coincidence. I had many things left to say.
I preferred to leave them for another time; first, because I did not want to abuse the space that magazine gave me; second, so that it would not be believed that it gives me any pleasure to denounce the moral misery that reigns in some sectors of the country; Third, because I waited for those who have the duty to react against that misery. Such hope, held for so long, reveals that I am one of the most naive men who walk this earth.

Because the reaction has come from somewhere else. The Chief of Police of the province of Buenos Aires, Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez, has finally decided to acknowledge receipt of the accusations that I made to him. And he has done it in the most skillful and at the same time most clumsy way he could do it. Later I will explain the clumsiness.

See now the skill. The chief of police of the province discovers a band of terrorists, undoubtedly real and existing. Doing his duty, he stops them. Among them he places a man, “Marcelo”, who is one of the secondary witnesses mentioned by me in *Operación Masacre.* He then chooses a judge, Dr. Viglione, who enjoys a reputation as a man of integrity, and gives him immediate intervention so that he can verify the correct treatment given to the detainees. And I am completely sure that that, precisely that, will have been one of the most measured, exemplary and even benevolent procedures that have ever been carried out in the repression of terrorism. Judge Viglione agrees to hold a press conference – which has nothing objectionable – and gives details about the terrorist plot. But then the ace out of the hole comes out, the key to everything, the hook for the naive. Under the protection of the august judge, sanctified by the presence of the august judge, Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez intervenes and addresses my journalist colleagues from the big newspapers, who believe they are there to hear the story of terrorism, but who in reality are there , without knowing it, so that Fernández Suárez can “lift” the charges that I make against him and that weigh so heavily on him. And my journalist colleagues from the big newspapers write, busily write, what Fernández Suárez dictates to them, without it occurring to any of them to ask a question, to raise a doubt. Let's see what they write.

The one from “The Reason”:

"At the same time, the Chief of Police referred to other antecedents of the aforementioned conspiracy, specifying that among the main suspects is Marcelo Rizzoni, who is the same person who managed to escape on June 9 of last year, shortly before a raid was carried out. in Florida where those involved in the rebellion of that date were arrested. He added that Rizzoni is the person who, under the pseudonym M, appeared supplying opposition newspapers with information about the shootings that served as the basis for developing a campaign against Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez, forging the details of that episode." The one from “The Nation”:

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“The Chief of Police, Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez, then added that this Marcelo is the one who, under the pseudonym M, provided data to some journalistic publications, naturally whimsical, for a campaign against police dependence due to the executions.” The one from “El Plata”, from La Plata:

"This subject Rizzoni is the one who provided the data to the newspaper 'Revolucion Nacional' for the virulent campaign it was running against the Chief of Police." That of “El Argentino”, from La Plata: “The Police Chief later stated that a terrorist who is detained and who turned out to be Marcelo Rizzoni, who was in charge of manufacturing the bombs, was in charge of providing false information about the shootings to the newspaper 'Revolucion Nacional', which publishes articles called 'Operation Massacre' in which the Chief of Police is blamed. All this information given by the aforementioned newspaper is false, since it is provided by a person like Rizzoni, who only pursues confusing purposes.”

That of “El Día”, from La

Plata: “Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez intervened to remember that one of the detainees, of primary activity in the terrorist organization, Marcelo Rizzoni, who signs 'Mr. "M' his collaborations in a newspaper in which he makes complaints about alleged torture, and he is the head of 'Operation Massacre', he has made statements of regret for his conduct..."

There are times when the lie becomes so thick that a certain method is needed to unravel it. In the absence of a better one, and even at the risk of boring, I will use one already used previously. The five journalistic versions that I have cited in increasing order of stupidity, contain the following palpably false, partially false or unproven facts, namely:

1. “Marcelo Rizzoni... is the same person who managed to escape on June 9 of last year shortly before a raid was carried out in Florida...” False. Marcelo did not “escape.” He was at the Florida house three times, and the last time he quietly left without suspecting anything and without subjectively believing that he was “escaping.” The man who escaped when the raid occurred was called Juan Carlos Torres.

2. *“...in Florida, where those involved in the rebellion of that date were arrested....”* Partially false. They arrested a suspect, who was Norberto Gavino, two or three suspects and nine or ten innocent people. And, from the point of view of the Martial Law that was applied to them, they were all innocent, even Gavino.

3. “Rizzoni is the person who, under the pseudonym M, appeared supplying opposition newspapers with information about the shootings…” False. Marcelo did not provide the information, but information. 4.

“...the information about the executions that served as the basis for developing a campaign against Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez..” False. The information that Marcelo brought not only did not serve as a basis for that “campaign,” but at the time he provided it it considerably improved the position of the Chief of Police, as we will see later.

5. *“...forging the details of that episode…”* False. The information provided by Marcelo, like all that I have used, is correct. I have verified it and can prove it before any civil or military court.

6. "...some journalistic publications, naturally whimsical..." Not proven

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whimsical

7. “This guy Rizzoni is the one who provided the data to the newspaper…” Partially false, see section 3.

8. *“...to the newspaper “Revolución Nacional”, which publishes...”* False. “National Revolution” has It stopped appearing a long time ago, and consequently does not publish anything. Public.

9. *“...who publishes articles called 'Operation Massacre'...”* False. “National Revolution” never published articles titled “Operation Massacre.”

10. *“Marcelo Rizzoni, who signs* Mr. M *for his contributions to a newspaper…”* False, and also an idiot. Marcelo is a witness, not a journalist. A witness whom I have called M. and not “Mr. M.” A witness who neither collaborates nor signs collaborations in any newspaper.

11. “...a newspaper in which he makes complaints about alleged torture...” False and Ridiculous to anyone who knows what they're talking about.

12. *“...and he is the head of 'Operation Massacre'...”* False. The editor of this version is confirmed to be oligophrenic. The undisputed leader of “Operation Massacre” was Lieutenant Colonel Fernández Suárez.

On a previous occasion I demonstrated that Fernández Suárez lied, mathematically, every two lines. Now, with the help of my fellow journalists, he has improved his own record.

Fernández Suárez intends to distort everything that I have published, making the information that serves as my basis appear as provided by a terrorist. But “Marcelo” is one witness among fifty, and perhaps the least important. The information, the true information, has been provided to me by Fernández Suárez himself. He is my main witness.

In case any civil or military court, or the information services, or the directors of serious newspapers, want to reconstruct step by step what I have investigated, these are the witnesses and statements, in order of importance: 1) Fernández Suárez in his report before

the Provincial Consultative on December 18, 1956; 2) judicial claim, ratification before the judge and oral

statements by Juan Carlos Livraga; 3) statement by Miguel Ángel Giunta; 4) oral testimony of Horacio di Chiano;

(I have spoken with each of these three

survivors at least half a dozen times.)

times, exhaustively investigating detail by detail)

5) statement signed by Norberto Gavino, which I have in my possession; 6)

joint statement signed by Julio Troxler and Reinaldo Benavídez, in my possession; 7) testimony

of the widow of Vicente Rodríguez; 8) testimony of

Mario Brión's relatives; 9) testimony of the widow of

Nicolás Carranza; 10) testimony of the widow of

Francisco Garibotti; 11) testimony of the relatives of

Carlos Lizaso; 12) testimony of Juan Carlos Torres; 13)

testimony of Giunta's relatives; 14)

testimony of Livraga's relatives; 15) testimony

of Di Chiano's relatives.

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There are hundreds of interviews that I have had over the course of four months with these witnesses and others of lesser importance, the vast majority of whom have not yet testified before any judge, civil or military.

My journalist colleagues from the big newspapers could take – now that there is no danger – the work that I took, instead of copying what the shooting lieutenant colonel dictates to them.

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# BRIEF HISTORY OF AN INVESTIGATION

In my story, “Marcelo” is mentioned three times with the initial M. I did not know him as a terrorist, but as a witness. I cannot, however, say that I am surprised that he became a terrorist: he was a bitter man, tremendously hurt. The ghost of Carlitos Lizaso – his chest streaked with blood, his cheek broken by a gunshot – pursued him relentlessly. His close friend Don Pedro Lizaso had commissioned him to watch over the boy.
He returned it dead.

To illustrate the extent to which it is false that “Marcelo” has provided *“the information that served as the basis”* for my articles, and to prevent new theatrical blows, I will have to briefly refer to the stages of my investigation. On December 18, 1956 I had the first news of the massacre. On the 19th I met Dr. Doglia. On the 20th I met Dr. von Kotsch and obtained a copy of Livraga's lawsuit. That same afternoon I sent it to the director of “Purposes”. On the 21st I met Livraga. On the 23rd the demand appeared published in “Purposes”.

That complaint and Livraga's oral account were quite accurate, but they contained two basic errors that greatly hampered all my subsequent inquiries. The first mistake was to affirm that in the back apartment, where Livraga was taken by his friend Rodríguez, there were only three other people. The second error consisted of assuming that only ten detainees traveled in the assault car.

On December 26, I finished writing my report on Livraga, which after a long pilgrimage was going to be published on January 15 in “Revolución Nacional.” In it, of course, those two errors appeared. But instead there was a notable success, almost a heartbeat, since it was based on some words heard by Livraga in a state of semi-consciousness: the hypothesis of a third survivor. I had no idea how widely it would be confirmed. And another success that did not see the public light: the almost direct mention of the Chief of Police as responsible for everything. The newspaper's editorial staff considered it too “bold” and crossed it out.

On December 27, I found in the newspapers from the time of the uprising the list of “shots in the San Martín area,” headed by Vicente Rodríguez. But there were also incredible mistakes, which were going to be real stones on the road. There was a “Crizaso” who I later discovered was Lizaso. Reinaldo Benavidez appeared dead, but he was actually alive. And Mario Brión was missing in his place.

At that time, therefore, the partially erroneous panorama that emerged from Livraga's lawsuit and the list was this: two survivors (Livraga and Giunta), five known dead (Rodríguez, Carranza, Garibotti, “Crizaso” and Benavidez); and three anonymous deaths.

On December 28, it occurred to me to review *all* the diaries from the time of the mutiny. Being April Fool's Day, it is not surprising that he found the statements of the Police Chief where he recounted the raid saying that he had arrested fourteen *people .* Thus began the endless and somewhat Kafkaesque process, in which I alternately lacked or had too much of a corpse or a survivor...

For reasons that do not matter much, an *impasse* then occurred that lasted twenty days.

On January 19, I located the scene of the execution and took photographs. The 20th was an extraordinary day. I traveled to Florida, met Giunta, managed to overcome his tenacious resistance and got

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to tell me his version of the events. That same afternoon I interviewed Rodríguez's widow. I took the opportunity to talk to the residents of the neighborhood. From all these conversations three very important pieces of information emerged: 1) the existence of a “third man”, a new survivor, just as I imagined; 2) the first mention of Mario Brión; 3) the first mention of the mysterious tenant of the apartment in the back, “a tall man who ran away,” according to what the neighborhood kids told me. That afternoon I found out more than I had in a month of false starts.

On January 29, 1957, the report on Rodríguez's widow was published in “Revolución Nacional”, where for the first time I pointed out Fernández Suárez as the author of the arrests and responsible for the executions.

On February 7 I had in my hands the stenographic version of the two sessions of the Provincial Consultative Committee, where torture and shootings had been debated. In one of them the already notorious confession of Fernández Suárez appeared.

On February 10, I returned to Florida for one of the missions that I knew beforehand was most difficult: locating the “third man.” I already knew what his name was. I had his address. They had assured me, however, that I would not find it. He was on the run, hiding somewhere. He didn't let anyone see him. He was still dominated by panic.

As usual, the neighborhood kids were my best informants. A little girl with bright eyes approached us mysteriously.

“The man you are looking for *is* in your house,” he whispered. They are going to tell you that it is not there, but *it is there.*

–And do you know why we came? -asked. -Yeah. "I know everything," he replied with supreme dignity. (There were dozens of scenes like this.) I will not recount the prodigies of eloquence that I had to display to finally find myself in front of Don Horacio di Chiano. But there he was, the third resurrected, alive and well.

With him I thought I had exhausted the survivors' chapter. It was already miraculous that all three had been saved. But the next day, February 11, I received one of the great surprises of my life. The letter I had in my hands was real, tangible. And in it, like a bomb, this paragraph: “When the innocent victims got off the assault car, they managed to escape Livraga, Giunta and the former non-commissioned officer Gavino. The latter was able to get into the Bolivian embassy and seek asylum in that country.”

The survivors, therefore, increased to four. I began to wonder if someone had really died. I went back to "my witnesses", and before each of them I was depositing, as if at random, a phrase: "That tall man, who escaped...". Until I got the mechanical, instant response I was looking for: –Torres.

–At the embassy...? -From Bolivia.

By the time my informant put his hand to his mouth, it was already too late. Except for the children, no one said anything voluntarily. But there are reflections. On February 19 I saw Torres at the Bolivian embassy. On the 21st I saw him again. That day it can be said that the investigation was completed.

The reports provided by Torres were astonishing. They not only confirmed the existence of Gavino. Benavídez, the one on the official list of executed, was not dead: he was exiled in Bolivia. And along with him a sixth survivor, whom I heard mentioned for the first time: Julio Troxler. And perhaps there was a seventh who, according to versions, was imprisoned in Olmos.

Torres did not remember his last name. I only knew that it was very common, something like Rodríguez... I consulted a list of prisoners in Olmos. When I saw Torres again, I threw him

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jug mouth: –Diaz? His face lit up.
–Diaz! How did he do it? –Rogelio Díaz? -Exact.
The account was complete. Rogelio Díaz was the seventh survivor.
On the same February 19, the third and most important of my notes – “The Truth about the Fusilados” – appeared in “Revolución Nacional”, with all the data gathered before seeing Torres. In it, Mario Brión was already mentioned, the existence of three survivors was affirmed and the existence of two others was conjectured, so I was certainly ahead of the information I had in my possession when writing it. On the 21st I was able to locate Mario Brión's relatives. Meanwhile, he had already found out the addresses of Carranza's widow and Garibotti's.

It is then, only then, with the case fully clarified and resolved, when “Marcelo” appears.

## AROUND “MARCELO”

At first, “Marcelo” was simply a telephone voice. A tense, nervous voice that called the headquarters of the newspaper “Revolucion Nacional” and asked to speak with the author of the articles that recounted the shootings of José León Suárez. We arranged an interview.
It was February 22, 1957. “Marcelo” was devastated when he learned that he was taking unnecessary risks, since all the information he brought me was already in my hands through Torres. The curious thing is that, even if I had never met these two men, I would still have found out about the existence of the new survivors.
Because on February 23 or 24 I received the third letter from the informant who signed “Atilas”, with the list of all the survivors. “Atilas” arrived 48 hours late, but anyway I take this opportunity here – in case you are reading me – to thank you for the valuable help you gave me.

There is not a single important piece of information in the text of *Operation Massacre* that is not based on the coincident and overlapping testimony of three or four people, and sometimes more. On the basic facts, I have ruthlessly dismissed all one-sided information, no matter how sensational. Inconsequential errors of detail may have slipped in, but the story is basically accurate and I can prove it before any civil or military court.

Returning to “Marcelo”, his testimony coinciding with that of Torres harmed Livraga and favored Fernández Suárez, which clearly demonstrates that it was true.
Based on Livraga's demand, I had assumed in my first articles in “Revolución Nacional” that Fernández Suárez detained only five people in the Florida house, and the others in the surrounding area, in an indiscriminate raid. Torres and “Marcelo” showed me that this was not the case, that *all* those shot had been detained inside the house. In this way the raid gained at least a certain logic and Fernández Suárez's behavior, before the mass murder, became more explainable. In all honesty I stated it the first opportunity I had. Torres went further: he admitted that he and Gavino were involved in the mutiny, although they did not take action. These people have spoken to me with complete sincerity and told me who they were who were engaged: Torres and Gavino. Who were the ones who were simply aware: Carranza and Lizaso. Who were the ones who knew absolutely nothing: Brión, Giunta, Di

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Chiano, Livraga and Garibotti. Remaining in the shadows, due to lack of concrete data, is the mental attitude of men like Rodríguez and Díaz. All this appears very clearly in my story.
As for Troxler and Benavídez, it matters little whether or not they were involved, whether or not they were aware: the only crime for which they were intended to be shot was knocking on the door of a house.

"Marcelo" was a man of small stature, sallow face, dark glasses, and a bitter and contemptuous expression. He was 37 years old, but he represented more. His most valuable contribution to my book were the moving, broken words with which he spoke about Carlitos Lizaso. He remembered him almost with the fervor of a father, in his little anecdotes, in his way of being, in his youthful joy. During the months that I was delving into this case, I have met women in whom crying is already a habit every day; with creatures with a definitely distant look ("Do you miss your dad a lot?" "Oh, yes, you don't know…"); with brothers in whom the clenched fist on a table is an extension of the homicidal gaze. But I have seen few things like the dull, terrible, lacerating pain of this man at the memory of that boy. In vain he tried to recreate his figure with a gesture, to resurrect his smile with a clumsy grimace, to "return him and ungag him"; He, a worn-out and sick man.

I regret that "Marcelo" has taken the sterile path of terror to dispel that ghost. But I ask: have the high judges and rulers who protect your friend's murderer offered you another? I know that nothing is more difficult than justifying a dynamiter, and I'm not even going to try. I can only say that, essentially, "Marcelo" was not that.
Essentially he was a man who suffered in an atrocious, permanent and sleepless way. When he remembered that he had left the house in Florida ten minutes before the raid, he repeated: "If only I had stayed... If only...." A manly modesty prevented him from saying that he, too, wished to be dead.

Now "Marcelo" is in prison, and I am happy for him that they captured him before his bombs could cause innocent victims. But I will not be the one to heap on the head of this destroyed man the adjectives of criminal, irresponsible and cowardly. I leave that task to my colleagues, the serious journalists, the lovers of the easy truth.

Terrorism in the abstract is certainly criminal, irresponsible and cowardly. But, between a desperate man like "Marcelo", corroded by his ghost and his passion for revenge; and a cold, gratuitous, conscious and methodical torturer and shooter, don't ask me who I'll stay with.

## THE PRESS CONFERENCE HE DIDN'T GIVE DOCTOR VIGLIONE

On July 11, 1957, Judge Viglione gathered journalists at the provincial Police Headquarters to inform them about the newly discovered terrorist organization in Boulogne, whose head would be "Marcelo." It seems good to me that the judge intervened in the proceedings, ensuring the treatment of the detainees, because that is the main function of a judge in the province of Buenos Aires. It also seems perfect to me that he quickly informed public opinion, because "in a democracy, dialogue is interesting," as Fernández Suárez once said. What seems bad to me is that the situation has been taken advantage of to discredit, with a childish stratagem, the unsubstantiated charges of multiple homicide that I have leveled against the Chief of Police. If that is not the case

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circumstance, I would have nothing to say and this note would not appear published. But malice is a double-edged sword, and here is the second edge. The answer to the clumsiness I mentioned before.

Over Dr. Viglione's press conference there must have floated, I will not say the specter of Banquo but the ghost of that other frustrated press conference at the end of January of this year, in which another judge, Dr. Hueyo, was going to announce the prosecution by Fernández Suárez. For that reason – and because I would have been interested in asking some modest and respectful questions to the Chief of Police present there; Since I understand that a press conference is something like a question and answer tournament, I regret not having been invited. It will be again, God willing.

What I regret most is that the judge has lost an almost unique opportunity to enlighten and educate people, which is also within his duties. The judge was then able to explain that terrorism is not something that is born by spontaneous generation. He was able to explain that the attitude of the terrorist from below who plants a bomb is the response to the terrorism from above who applies the cattle prod. He was able to explain that the bomb that kills an innocent person is not very different from the discharge of the platoon that kills another innocent person. And that, if any differential nuance can be established, it is in favor of the terrorist from below, who at least does not have assured impunity, does not believe he is defending democracy, freedom and justice, and does not organize press conferences.

No one was in better conditions than the judge to give the entire country this masterful lesson in sanity, common sense and fortitude. Because in the province of Buenos Aires there is no one - except the torturers themselves - who knows more about the police torture system than Dr. Viglione.

To demonstrate this, I will limit myself to transcribing a part of the report that the socialist advisor, Dr. Eduardo Schaposnik, presented to the provincial Advisory Board on December 27, 1956. I hope “La Nación” says that this is “whimsical.” I hope “La Razón” says that this is “forged.” I hope that “El Día” de La Plata talks about “alleged” torture.
I hope that all this will serve as a topic for Dr. Viglione's next press conference.
Dr. Schaposnik said: I

have been with Mr. Counselor Bronzini in the office of two judges, to have an impression that would allow us to know if our information (about torture) was true or not. What we have learned, especially from the words of Dr. Viglione, whom I appreciate as a man in his civic activity, and whom I respect even more for the gifts that he has shown to possess for the judiciary, in his brief but brilliant performance in which he has put so much zeal and enthusiasm, it is definitive. And the verifications it has reached are discouraging for our faith in some men. There is a rise in torture that begins its growing evolution from the beginning of this year and has its culminating period on the days of the uprising of June 9 and 10...

Then come some paragraphs that I have already cited in the text of *Operation Massacre.* Dr. Schaposnik then said: *I have found*

*in the criminal courts numerous files for torture of which there is no doubt, because in one of them the material authors have been sentenced to four years in prison in the first instance by the judge. Dr. Viglione, and is currently under appeal in the respective chamber. Another who is still in the first instance in the same court is worth highlighting to see if the*

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*accusations, truly overwhelming and painful for a man with two cents of sensitivity, do not affect the prestige of the institution.*

*I will now summarize part of the proceedings of the criminal file for complaints of torture that are being processed before Dr. Viglione's court.*

*Page one, Court minutes: dated April 9, 1956, Dr. Viglione, having learned that illegal coercion against detainees is repeatedly committed in the Lanús investigation brigade, decides to establish the Court in that police department.*

*Page one turn: Dr. Viglione has been appointed to the aforementioned police section, accompanied by the Court secretaries, he tours the cells and is informed by the detainees Héctor, Agustín Daniel and Julio Jorge Silva, Agapito Rearte, Rómulo Fernández, Héctor A. Milito, Mariano Enrique Gareca, Carlos Neme, Miguel Artemio Longhi, Alfredo Richler, Alfonso Dande, Ernesto Arturo Suárez, Domingo Cuervo and Domingo Prieto, who were injured from having been subjected to torture in the same facilities in which they were, therefore that it is decided to require the presence of the police doctor, Dr. Ricardo Alberto Díaz, who reports separately. The detainees then denounce their torturers: Rearte the employee Fariña; Employees Zapiola and Fernández subjected Milito to prods; Cuervo claims that the employee Gatti and others he recognized hit him; Prieto says that the employee Fumagalli and others hit him and applied the cattle prod; Richler saw when his companions were taken to the cell completely naked and in poor condition, as a result of the torture they had suffered. The minutes are signed by all the mentioned detainees, the judge and the secretaries.*

*The police doctor's report says: That the detainees Héctor, Agustín Daniel and Julio Jorge Silva have the following injuries: linear abrasions on the right lateral aspect and on the left lateral aspect of the upper hemiabdomen. Multiple punctate ecchymoses throughout almost the entire abdomen, with an evolution of seven days; produced with a hard, pointed instrument passed over the area with discreet pressure; The latter have been produced by a small instrument with a small surface without a tip, which has acted with sufficient violence to produce these small superficial blood spills.*

*Agapito Néstor Rearte: two scars approximately half a centimeter in diameter on the dorsal region of the penis; Due to their size, they correspond to burns and have a date of no less than seven days and no more than fifteen days.*

*Rómulo Fernández: bruises of approximately eight days of evolution in the right lower eyelid, caused by a blunt element, which could have been hit by a fist.*

*Milito: ecchymosis in the inguino-scrotal region, caused by a blunt element.*

*Carlos Neme: punctate scars on the penis and scrotum, the same type as those of Rearte.*

*Domingo Prieto: blunt wound in the right knee and a superficial wound in the arm right; These lesions are in full healing and are three or four days old.*

Dr. Schaposnik then said: *I am not going to continue reading records from the summary that reliably demonstrate the mistreatment inflicted by the personnel of the Lanús Investigation Brigade on the detainees. Commissioner Mucci, who directed the investigations in Lanús, is still in office... These are examples that I give. My presentation would be endless if I had dedicated myself to taking the necessary notes from the court files...*

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Didn't this deserve another press conference? Admitting that it is necessary – and I do not dispute it – to provoke a public reaction against terrorism from below, is it not also urgent to found a great movement of opinion that will annihilate forever the terrorists from above, the torturers, the shooters?

I am beginning to convince myself that it is a misfortune, a kind of psychological defect that respectable people avoid, to always see both sides of the coin. That two-cent piece of sensitivity, which Dr. Schaposnik claimed.

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# PROVISIONAL EPILOGUE

## *(from the first edition, July 1957)*

Due to different circumstances that do not exclude chance, I have been quite closely affected by the three revolutions – two crushed in very different ways, one victorious in between – that shook the country in 1955 and 1956.

I can, without remorse, repeat that I have been a supporter of the outbreak of September 1955. Not only for compelling reasons of family affection - which there were - but because I harbored the certainty that a system that flouted civil liberties had just been overthrown, that It denied the right of expression, which encouraged obedience on the one hand and excess on the other. And I don't have a short memory: what I thought then, wrong or not, I still think.

At the end of 1955 I wrote a newspaper article with which I proposed to pay tribute to three men from the naval aviation, who died in the Southern campaign, fighting with simple and verifiable heroism. For reasons that are better not to remember, the authorities of the Ministry of the Navy vetoed that note, first verbally and then in writing. They understood that the fallen, their own dead, could do without such a tribute – which their enemies might not have denied them – and I understood that I could do without the opinion of the Ministry of the Navy. Because both then and now I believe that journalism is free, or it is a farce, with no middle ground. And the article, naturally, was published with my signature, despite the express authorization that I still have in my hands. It is not idly that I remember that episode, perhaps the first in the long series that allowed the Revolution to devour its heroes and deny its dead, and thereby lose its attribute as Liberator and many other things. Because in that note I pointed out with all deliberation that, along with Captain Estivariz and Lieutenant Irigoin, a non-commissioned officer who was a Peronist had fallen. A man who, being able to avoid commitment – as others more exalted did – had placed his esprit de corps, his loyalty to the uniform and his devotion to his superior, first; and, in a distant second, his endearing and in him very respectable political idea. Those charred and unrecognizable remains of three men, two revolutionaries and a Peronist, inside the same plane torn to pieces, fallen in the same fight, consumed in the same fire of heroism, undoubtedly meant something.

That was a sign, that was a warning, that was a tremendous symbol, that was a pact sealed with blood. What does it mean now, almost two years later, when the short-sighted, the cowardly and the clumsy have done nothing but violate such a commitment?
It only occurs to me to say: lucky are those three, who are dead, united and untouched in their glorious eternity.

The June 9 revolution hit me closer. For simple geographical reasons, I literally had it inside my house. To get to it in the middle of the morning I had to go through a combat zone, on the corner of 54th and 4th, in La Plata. In those thirty steps that covered the fire sector of the Second Division Command, I learned what uncontrollable physical fear was.

But it is not because of simple picturesqueness that I remember the small episode. On that corner, behind a car used as a barricade, amidst the crackling of rifle fire, I had

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stopped – final recipient of an “Al-tó-o!” endless and symmetrical of invisible shooters – a short, rather fat man with a mustache, a leather jacket and a submachine gun at his waist. He asked me where I was going. Intermittently, I spoke to him about my family, who was fifty meters away, in the area where the most intense shooting of that entire day took place. He did not demand documents from me – which I did not have with me –, he did not ask my opinion about what was happening. He limited himself to telling me, shrugging his shoulders: –If you feel like it, come in.

He was the head of the rebel group. A man who now sells balloons in a plaza in Montevideo. I thought and I still think – note well – that that man was wrong. Because he couldn't know that, at that very moment, they were justifying him. He could not know that, at that very moment, a character who did not dare to dare to venture into that battlefield was coldly ordering the execution of twelve poor devils. He could not know that, behind the wall and the little green door of the Command, another man –
Juan Carlos Longoni, who was risking his life for the opposite idea, was going to risk and lose his career to rehabilitate those poor devils. Neither he, nor I, nor Longoni knew anything.

But that Sergeant Ferrari from the rebel group let me pass, and possibly he must have regretted it. Because two hours later my house became a shelter for forty loyal soldiers who, over the shock, fired at it. Those men from the second City Bell Communications Battalion will not remember my face, which they barely saw in the darkness, or my name, which they did not find out; but I am sure that none of them – not even Lieutenant Cruset, or Decruset, who commanded them – will ever forget that tall wooden door that was the only one to open for them on 54th Street, under the rebel fire that threatened decimate them and that, on the opposite sidewalk, the line of Marines had already left.

One of them had just died, across the road, ten meters away. I heard the cry of terror and loneliness that he let out as he fell, when the patrol, taken by surprise, retreated momentarily: “Don't leave me alone! Sons of b..., don't leave me alone! His companions later took the machine gun nest that had killed him from a construction site. But Bernardino Rodríguez, 21 years old, died believing that his comrades, his friends, were abandoning him in death. And that hurt me then, and it still hurts me now, like so many useless things.

At that moment I knew what a revolution was, its sordid face that nothing can compensate for. And I hated that revolution with all my might. And, by reflection, to all the previous ones, no matter how fair they may have been. And I continued to understand it in the tense hours that followed, seeing around me the undisguised fear in those almost childish faces of soldiers, who did not know if they were "loyal" or "rebel", but knew that they were obliged to shoot at other soldiers. identical to them, who also did not know if they were loyal or rebels.

If there is something precisely that I have tried to raise in these pages, it is the horror of revolutions, whose first victims are always innocent people, like those shot by José León Suárez or like that conscript who fell a few meters from where I was. Poor people don't die shouting "Long live the country", like in the novels. He dies vomiting from fear, like Nicolás Carranza, or cursing his abandonment, like Bernardino Rodríguez.

Only a weak-minded person can not desire peace.

But peace is not acceptable at any price.

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And there will always be new uprisings germinating, and new waves of senseless revenge – even if they later have the opposite direction – as long as men like the current Chief of Police of the province of Buenos Aires, Lieutenant, remain at the head of the repressive agencies of the State. Colonel Desiderio Fernández Suárez.

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# EPILOGUE

## *(from the second edition, 1964)*

Now I want to say what I have achieved with this book, but mainly what I have not achieved. I want to name what was in some way a victory, and what was a defeat; what I have gained and what I have lost.

It was a victory to clarify facts that initially appeared confusing, disturbing, even implausible, with almost no help other than that of a girl and a few harassed men who were the victims. It was a victory to overcome the fear that, at the beginning, above all, attacked me with some intensity, and to get them to overcome it, although they had an experience of fear that I will never be able to match. It was a victory to get a man like “Marcelo”, who did not even know us, to come and bring us his information, risking the ambush and the cattle prod that later lacerated him; to make even little Cassandra from Florida know that we could be trusted with a man's life. It has been a triumph to find myself years later with the childish smile of Troxler, who saved those who were saved that night, and not speak a word about that night.

In the rest, I lost. He wanted the government, that of Aramburu, that of Frondizi, that of Guido, any government, through the mouth of the most distracted, the most innocent of its officials, to recognize that that night of June 10, 1956, in the name of the Argentine Republic , an atrocity was committed.

I wanted any government of this country to recognize those men who died that the justice system of this country killed them by mistake, by stupidity, by blindness, by whatever. I know that they don't care, the dead. But there was a question of decency, I don't know how to say it.

He claimed that, to those who were saved –Livraga disfigured by gunshots; Giunta almost mad; Di Chiano hiding in a basement; to the others, exiled – any authority, any institution, any respectable thing in this civilized country, would recognize them, even with words, here where words are so easy, where words cost nothing, that there was an error, that there was a fatal thoughtlessness, why say a crime.

That the six children of Carranza and the six of Garibotti, the three of Rodríguez and the one of Brión, and the wives of those men were recognized with some right emanating from the bloody carrion that the justice of this country, and no other , he took to the cemetery, of all those bodies that were people loved by his people. That they should be given something, a testimony, a word, a pension, not as big as that of a general, not as big as that of a judge of the Court, who could claim so much. Something.

In this I failed. Aramburu promoted Fernández Suárez; He did not rehabilitate his victims. Frondizi had a dedicated copy of this book in his hands: he promoted Aramburu. I think that later I was no longer interested. In 1957 I grandly said: “This case is standing, and will remain standing for as long as it takes, months or years.” I ask to retract that guilty phrase. This case is no longer standing, it is just a fragment of history, this case is dead.

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In other things I also failed. He wanted Fernández Suárez to be tried, dismissed, and punished. When it became clear that none of that was going to happen, I wanted to punish him myself, in my own way, with my own weapons; I persecuted him perhaps with the same ferocity with which he persecuted, tortured, killed; I flogged him week by week. To the extent that this attempt has made me similar to him, I again ask to retract it. What do I care about Fernández Suárez?

There is yet another failure. When I wrote this story, I was thirty years old. I had been in journalism for ten years. Suddenly it seemed to me to understand that everything I had done before had nothing to do with a certain idea of journalism that I had been forging in all that time, and that this did – that all-risk search, that testimony of the most hidden and painful–, I had to see, it fit that idea. Protected by such an occurrence, I investigated and immediately wrote another hidden story, that of the Satanowsky case. It was noisier, but the result was the same: the dead, very dead; and the murderers, tried, but loose.

Then I asked myself if it was worth it, if what I was pursuing was not a chimera, if the society in which one lives really needs to know about things like this. I still don't have an answer. It will be understood, in any case, that I have lost some illusions, the illusion in justice, in reparation, in democracy, in all those words, and finally in what was once my job, and is no longer. .

I reread the story that you have read. There are whole sentences that bother me, I think with annoying that now I would write it better.

Would you write it?

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# PORTRAIT OF THE DOMINANT OLIGARCHY

## *(end of epilogue of the third edition, 1969)*

The generalizations that follow cannot be accused of impatience.

Today we can go orderly from minor to major and perfect, in light of the murder, the portrait of the dominant oligarchy. The soldiers of June 1956, unlike others who revolted before and after, were shot because they tried to speak on behalf of the people: more specifically, of Peronism and the working class. The torture and murders that preceded and followed the 1956 massacre are characteristic, inevitable and not anecdotal episodes of the class struggle in Argentina. The Manchego case, the Vallese case, the murder of Méndez, Mussi and Retamar, the death of Pampillón, the murder of Hilda Guerrero, the daily prod sessions in police stations throughout the country, the brutal repression of worker and student demonstrations, the iniquitous raids in slums are links in the same chain.

It was useless in 1957 to ask for justice for the victims of "Operation Massacre", just as it was useless in 1958 to ask that General Cuaranta be punished for the murder of Satanowsky, just as it was useless in 1968 to demand that the murderers of Blajaquis and Zalazar be punished. , protected by the government. Within the system, there is no justice.

Other authors have been drawing an increasingly refined image of that oligarchy, dominant vis-à-vis Argentines, and dominated vis-à-vis foreigners. That this class is temperamentally inclined to murder is an important connotation, which must be taken into account every time the fight against it is undertaken. Not to duplicate their exploits, but to not be moved by the sacred ideas, the sacred principles and, in general, the beautiful souls of the executioners.

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# OPEN LETTER FROM A WRITER

# TO THE MILITARY BOARD*

1. The censorship of the press, the persecution of intellectuals, the raid on my house in Tigre, the murder of dear friends and the loss of a daughter who died fighting them, are some of the facts that force me to this form of clandestine expression after having given his opinion freely as a writer and journalist for almost thirty years.

The first anniversary of this Military Junta has motivated a balance of government action in official documents and speeches, where what you call successes are errors, those you recognize as errors are crimes and what you omit are calamities.

On March 24, 1976, you overthrew a government of which you were a part, to whose discredit you contributed as executors of its repressive policy, and whose end was marked by elections called for nine months later.

From that perspective, what you liquidated was not the temporary mandate of Isabel Martínez but the possibility of a democratic process where the people would remedy evils that you continued and aggravated.

Illegitimate in its origin, the government that you exercise was able to legitimize itself in the facts by recovering the program in which eighty percent of Argentines agreed in the 1973 elections and that still stands as an objective expression of the will of the people, the only possible meaning. of that “national being” that you so often invoke.

By reversing that path you have restored the flow of ideas and interests of minorities defeated that hinder the development of productive forces, exploit the people and disintegrate the Nation.

A similar policy can only be imposed temporarily by banning parties, intervening in unions, muzzling the press and implanting the deepest terror that Argentine society has ever known.

2. Fifteen thousand missing, ten thousand prisoners, four thousand dead, tens of thousands of exiled are the naked number of that terror.

Once the ordinary prisons were overcrowded, you created virtual concentration camps in the main garrisons of the country where no judge, lawyer, journalist, or international observer enters.

The military secrecy of the procedures, invoked as a necessity for the investigation, converts most arrests into kidnappings that allow unlimited torture and

*Walsh mailed this letter, dated March 24, 1977, to the editorial staff of local newspapers and to correspondents of foreign newspapers. On March 25, 1977, Walsh was kidnapped by a “Task Group” and has remained missing since. The letter was not published by any local media, but little by little it spread abroad. Starting with the reissue carried out in 1984, De la Flor included it as an Appendix in all reprints of *Operación Masacre. (N. of the E.)*

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the execution without trial.1

More than seven thousand habeas corpus petitions have been answered negatively this last year. In thousands of other cases of disappearance, the appeal has not even been presented because its uselessness is known in advance or because there is no lawyer who dares to present it after the fifty or sixty who did so were in turn kidnapped.

In this way you have stripped torture of its limit in time. Since the detainee does not exist, there is no possibility of presenting him to the judge in ten days as required by a law that was respected even in the repressive summits of previous dictatorships.

The lack of limit in time has been complemented by the lack of limit in methods, going back to times when operations were carried out directly on the joints and viscera of the victims, now with surgical and pharmacological auxiliaries that the former executioners did not have available. . The rack, the wheel, the skinning in life, the saw of the medieval inquisitors reappear in the testimonies along with the cattle prod and the “submarine”, the blowtorch of contemporary updates.2

Through successive concessions to the assumption that the goal of exterminating the guerrilla justifies all the means you use, you have arrived at absolute, timeless, metaphysical torture to the extent that the original goal of obtaining information is lost in the disturbed minds that use it. They administer to give in to the impulse to crush the human substance until it breaks and makes it lose the dignity, which the executioner lost, which you yourselves have lost.

3. The refusal of this Board to publish the names of the prisoners is also the cover of a systematic execution of hostages in open places and in the early hours of the morning under the pretext of forged battles and imaginary escape attempts.

Extremists who pamphletize the countryside, paint ditches or pile up tens of people in vehicles that catch fire are the stereotypes of a script that is not made to be believed but to mock the international reaction to proper executions while internally the character is underlined. of reprisals unleashed in the same places and immediately after the guerrilla actions.

Seventy shot after the bomb in Federal Security, 55 in response to the bombing of the La Plata Police Department, 30 for the attack on the Ministry of Defense, 40 in the New Year's Massacre that followed the death of Colonel Castellanos, 19 after the explosion that destroyed the Ciudadela police station, are part of 1,200 executions in 300

[1] Since January 1977, the Board began to publish incomplete lists of new detainees and those “released,” most of whom are not such but defendants who are no longer at its disposal but remain imprisoned. The names of thousands of prisoners are still a military secret and the conditions for their torture and subsequent execution remain intact.

[2] The Peronist leader Jorge Lizaso was skinned while he was alive; a former radical deputy, Mario Amaya, beaten to death, the former deputy Muñiz Barreto, broken neck with a blow. Testimony of a survivor: “Prods on my arms, hands, thighs, near my mouth every time I cried or prayed... Every twenty minutes they opened the door and told me that they were going to make me meat with the saw machine. that was heard.”

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supposed combats where the opponent had no injuries and the forces under his command had no deaths.

Repositories of a collective guilt abolished in the civilized norms of justice, incapable of influencing the policy that dictates, the facts for which they are retaliated against, many of these hostages are union delegates, intellectuals, relatives of guerrillas, unarmed opponents, simple suspects. those who are killed to balance the balance of casualties according to the foreign doctrine of “corpse counting” used by the SS in occupied countries and the invaders in Vietnam.

The killing of guerrillas wounded or captured in real combat is also evidence that emerges from military statements that in one year attributed 600 deaths and only 10 or 15 injuries to the guerrilla, a proportion unknown in the fiercest conflicts. This impression is confirmed by a journalistic sampling of clandestine circulation that reveals that between December 18, 1976 and February 3, 1977, in 40 real actions, the legal forces had 23 dead and 40 wounded, and the guerrillas had 63 dead. 3

More than one hundred defendants have also been killed in escape attempts whose official story is not intended for anyone to believe but rather to warn the guerrillas and the parties that even recognized prisoners are the strategic reserve for the reprisals available to them. the Corps Commanders according to the progress of the combats, the educational convenience, the mood of the moment.

This is how General Benjamín Menéndez, head of the Third Corps of the Army, has won his laurels before March 24 with the murder of Marcos Osatinsky, detained in Córdoba, later with the death of Hugo Vaca Narvaja and fifty other prisoners in various applications of the law of escape executed without mercy and narrated without shame.4 The murder of Dardo Cabo, arrested in April 1975, shot on January 6, 1977 with seven other prisoners under the jurisdiction of the First Army Corps commanded by General Suárez Ma-són , reveals that these episodes are not the outbursts of some hallucinated centurions but the very policy that you plan in your staff, discuss in your cabinet meetings, impose as commanders in chief of the 3 Arms and approve as members of the Government Board.

4. Between one thousand five hundred and three thousand people have been secretly massacred after you prohibited reporting on findings of corpses that in some cases have transcended, however, due to affecting other countries, due to their genocidal magnitude or due to the

[3] Informative Chain”, message No. 4, February 1977.

[4] An exact version appears in this letter from the prisoners in the Prison for Indicted Persons to the Bishop of Córdoba, Monsignor Primatesta: “On May 17, six companions are removed with the deception of going to the infirmary, who are then shot. These are Miguel Ángel Mosse, José Svaguza, Diana Fidelman, Luis Verón, Ricardo Yung and Eduardo Hernández, whose death in an escape attempt was reported by the Third Army Corps. On May 29, José Puchet and Carlos Sgadurra were retired. The latter had been punished to the point that he could not stand, suffering several broken limbs. Then they also appear shot in an escape attempt.”

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panto caused among his own forces.5

Twenty-five mutilated bodies surfaced between March and October 1976 on the Uruguayan coast, perhaps a small part of the cargo of those tortured to death in the Navy Mechanics School, anchored in the Río de la Plata by ships of that force, including the 15-year-old boy, Floreal Avellaneda, tied hand and foot, “with injuries to the anal region and visible fractures” according to his autopsy. A real lake cemetery was discovered in August 1976 by a neighbor who was diving in Lake San Roque in Córdoba. He went to the police station where they did not receive the complaint and he wrote to the newspapers that did not publish it.6

Thirty-four corpses in Buenos Aires between April 3 and 9, 1976, eight in San Telmo on July 4, ten in the Luján River on October 9, serve as a framework for the massacres of August 20 that totaled 30 dead 15 kilometers from Campo de Mayo and 17 in Lomas de Zamora.

These statements exhaust the fiction of right-wing gangs, alleged heirs of López Rega's 3 A's, capable of crossing the largest garrison in the country in military trucks, of carpeting the Río de la Plata with dead people or of throwing prisoners into the sea from the transports of the 1st Air Brigade,7 without General Videla, Admiral Massera or Brigadier Agosti finding out. The 3 A's are today the 3 Weapons, and the Board that you preside over is not the balance between "violence of different signs" nor the fair arbiter between "two terrorisms", but the very source of terror that has lost its way and can only stammer the speech of death.8

The same historical continuity links the assassination of General Carlos Prats, during the previous government, with the kidnapping and death of General Juan José Torres, Zelmar Michelini,

[5] In the first 15 days of military government, 63 bodies were found, according to the newspapers. An annual projection gives the figure of 1,500. The presumption that it could amount to double that is based on the fact that since January 1976 journalistic information was incomplete and on the global increase in repression after the coup. A credible global estimate of the deaths caused by the Junta is as follows. Killed in combat: 600. Shot: 1,300. Secretly executed: 2,000. Miscellaneous: 100.
Total: 4000.

[6] Letter from Isaías Zanotti, broadcast by ANCLA, Clandestine News Agency.

[7] “Program” directed between July and December 1976 by Brigadier Mariani, head of the First Palomar Air Brigade. *Fokker F-27* transports were used .

[8] Foreign Minister Vice Admiral Guzzeti in a report published by “La Opinión” on 3-10-76 admitted that “right-wing terrorism is not such” but “an antibody.”

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Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz and dozens of asylum seekers, who wanted to kill the possibility of democratic processes in Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay.9

The certain participation in these crimes of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Federal Police, led by officers with scholarships from the CIA through the AID, such as commissioners Juan Gattei and Antonio Gettor, themselves subject to the authority of Mr. Gardener Hathaway, Station Chief of the CIA in Argentina, is a hotbed of future revelations such as those that today shake the international community, which will not be exhausted even when the role of that agency and of senior Army chiefs, led by the General Menéndez, in the creation of the Liberators of America Lodge, which replaced the 3 A's until its global role was assumed by that Board in the name of the 3 Arms.

This picture of extermination does not even exclude the personal settlement of accounts such as the murder of Captain Horacio Gándara, who for a decade had been investigating the offices of senior Navy chiefs, or of the “Prensa Libre” journalist, Horacio Novillo, who was stabbed. and burned after that newspaper denounced Minister Martínez de Hoz's connections with international monopolies.

In light of these episodes, the definition of the war pronounced by one of its leaders takes on its final meaning: “The fight we wage does not recognize moral or natural limits, it takes place beyond good and evil.”10

5. These events, which shake the conscience of the civilized world, are not, however, those that have brought the greatest suffering to the Argentine people nor the worst violations of human rights that you incur. In the economic policy of that government, we must seek not only the explanation for its crimes but also a greater atrocity that punishes millions of human beings with planned misery.

In one year you have reduced the real salary of workers to 40%, reduced their participation in the national income to 30 *%,* raised from 6 to 18 hours the working day that a worker needs to pay for the family basket,11 thus resurrecting forms of forced labor that do not persist even in the last colonial strongholds.

Freezing salaries with butts while prices rise at the tips of bayonets, abolishing all forms of collective claims, prohibiting assemblies and committees.

[9] General Prats, President Allende's last Army Minister, killed by a bomb in September 1974. Former Uruguayan parliamentarians Michelini and Gutiérrez Ruiz were found riddled with bullets on 2-5-76. The body of General Torres, former president of Bolivia, appeared on 2-6-76, after the Minister of the Interior and former Chief of Police of Isabel Martínez, General Harguindeguy, accused him of “simulating” his kidnapping.

[10] Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Ildebrando Pascarelli, according to “La Razón” of 6/12/76. Chief of the Citadel Artillery Group I. Pascarelli is allegedly responsible for 33 executions between January 5 and February 3, 1977.

[11] Union of Swiss Banks, data corresponding to June 1976. Afterwards the situation worsened even more.

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internal sions, lengthening hours, raising unemployment to a record 9 %12 and promising to increase it with 300,000 new layoffs, have taken production relations back to the beginning of the industrial era, and when the workers have wanted to protest they have described them as subversive, kidnapping entire bodies of delegates who in some cases appeared dead, and in others did not appear.13

The results of this policy have been devastating. In this first year of government, food consumption has decreased by 40%, clothing consumption by more than 50%, and medicine consumption has practically disappeared in the popular strata. There are already areas of Greater Buenos Aires where infant mortality exceeds 30%, a figure that puts us on par with Rhodesia, Dahomey or the Guianas; diseases such as summer diarrhea, parasitosis and even rabies in which the numbers climb towards world records or surpass them. As if these were desired and sought-after goals, you have reduced the public health budget to less than a third of military expenses, suppressing even free hospitals while hundreds of doctors, professionals and technicians join the exodus caused by terror, low salaries or “rationalization”.

It is enough to walk a few hours through Greater Buenos Aires to see how quickly such a policy turns it into a slum of ten million inhabitants. Half-lit cities, entire neighborhoods without water because monopolistic industries plunder the underground layers, thousands of blocks converted into a single pothole because you only pave the military neighborhoods and decorate the Plaza de Mayo, the largest river in the world contaminated in all its aspects. beaches because the associates of Minister Martínez de Hoz throw their industrial waste there, and the only government measure that you have taken is to prohibit people from bathing.

Nor have you been more fortunate in the abstract goals of the economy, which you usually call “the country.” A decrease in the gross product that borders on 3%, a foreign debt that reaches 600 dollars per inhabitant, an annual inflation of 400%, an increase in currency that in just one week in December reached 9% , a drop of 13% in foreign investment they also constitute world brands, a rare fruit of cold deliberation and crude ineptitude.

While all the creative and protective functions of the State atrophy until they dissolve into pure anemia, a single one grows and becomes autonomous. One billion eight hundred million dollars, equivalent to half of Argentine exports, budgeted for Security and Defense in 1977, four thousand new agent positions in the Federal Police, twelve thousand in the province of Buenos Aires with salaries that double that of a industrial worker and triple that of a school director, while secretly raising military salaries by 120% starting in February , they prove that there is no freeze or unemployment in the kingdom of torture and death, the only field of the Argentine activity where the product grows and where the price per downed guerrilla rises faster than the dollar.

[12] "Clarín" newspaper.

[13] Among the kidnapped national leaders are Mario Aguirre from ATE, Jorge Di Pasquale from Farmacia, and Oscar Smith from Luz y Fuerza. The kidnappings and murders of delegates have been particularly serious in metallurgical and naval sectors.

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6. Dictated by the International Monetary Fund according to a recipe that is applied indistinctly to Zaire or Chile, Uruguay or Indonesia, the economic policy of that Board only recognizes as beneficiaries the old livestock oligarchy, the new speculative oligarchy and a select group of international monopolies headed by ITT, Esso, the automotive companies, US Steel, Siemens, to which Minister Martínez de Hoz and all the members of his cabinet are personally linked.

An increase of 722% in the prices of animal production in 1976 defines the magnitude of the oligarchic restoration undertaken by Martínez de Hoz in line with the creed of the Rural Society expounded by its president Celedonio Pereda: “Full of astonishment that certain small groups but actively continue to insist that food must be cheap.”14

The spectacle of a Stock Exchange where in a week it has been possible for some to earn one hundred and two hundred percent without working, where there are companies that doubled their capital overnight without producing more than before, the crazy wheel of Speculation in dollars, bills, adjustable securities, simple usury that already calculates interest per hour, are very curious facts under a government that came to put an end to the “feast of the corrupt.” Denationalizing banks puts national savings and credit in the hands of foreign banks, compensating ITT and Siemens rewards companies that defrauded the State, returning the outlets increases the profits of Shell and Esso, reducing Customs tariffs create jobs in Hong Kong or Singapore and unemployment in Argentina. Given all of these facts, it is worth asking who are the stateless people in the official statements, where are the mercenaries at the service of foreign interests, what is the ideology that threatens the national being.

If overwhelming propaganda, a distorted reflection of evil events, did not pretend that this Junta seeks peace, that General Videla defends human rights or that Admiral Massera loves life, it would still be possible to ask the Commanders in Chief of the 3 Arms that they meditate on the abyss to which they are leading the country after the illusion of winning a war that, even if they killed the last guerrilla, would only begin in new forms, because the causes that have motivated the resistance of the Argentine people for more than twenty years do not exist. They will be gone if not aggravated by the memory of the havoc caused and the revelation of the atrocities committed.

These are the reflections that on the first anniversary of your unfortunate government I wanted to convey to the members of that Board, without hope of being heard, with the certainty of being persecuted, but faithful to the commitment that I assumed a long time ago to bear witness in difficult moments.

Rodolfo Walsh. - CI 2845022

Buenos Aires, March 24, 1977.

[14] “Free Press”, 12-16-76.

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On June 9, 1956, Generals Tanco and Valle revolted against the de facto government that had dismissed Perón in September 1955. The uprising was brutally and illegally repressed.

There were many deaths, of which only seven fell in action. In the José León Suárez garbage dumps, a group of civilians – some of them vaguely related to the conspiracy; the rest, completely unrelated to it, were massacred even before martial law was issued. A few managed to escape death, barely.

In 1957, Rodolfo Walsh undertook the investigation of these events, the results of which
He published it in the form of notes in the newspaper "Majoría" and, shortly after, as a book.
OPERACIÓN MASSACRE, one of the first "non-fiction" novels written in Spanish, anticipated *New Journalism by nine years,* that is, the application of procedures typical of the novel genre to the reporting of true events.

Ediciones de la Flor is proud to publish again – in definitive edition – this
classic of Argentine political literature.

*Rodolfo Walsh was born in 1927 in the town of Choele-Choel, in the province of Río Negro. Since March 25, 1977, his name has been part of the long list of missing people.*
*during the military dictatorship that began in 1976.* THE OPEN LETTER FROM A WRITER TO THE
JUNTA MILITAR – *an example of investigative and denunciatory journalism – included as an appendix in this book (dated one day before his disappearance) was his last public word, a word that could not be silenced with his kidnapping or his probable death.*
*Other published works by Walsh are:* DIEZ POLICE STORIES, ANTHOLOGY OF THE STRANGE TALE and, in *De la Flor:* VARIATIONS IN RED, STORY FOR TAHÚRES AND OTHER POLICE STORIES, THE LAND TRADES, A KILO of *gold, The Granada and The Battle (theater ), Who killed Rosendo? and Satanowsky Case.*